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Fernand Léger's pencil study for *The Creation of the World*, a new ballet based on a text by Blaise Cendrars with music by Darius Milhaud; choreography by Jean Borita and set and costumes by Light Millard; reproduced from *The Modern Drawing: 100 Works on Paper from The Museum of Modern Art* by John Elderfield (212pp, with 100 illustrations, Thames and Hudson, £25.00/50.00/33.00).

Timothy Garton Ash

RONALD HAYMAN
Brecht: A Biography
430pp. Weidenfeld and Nicolson. £18.50 (paperback, £8.95).
0371781987

Bertolt Brecht is the most influential German playwright of the twentieth century, but we still have no satisfactory biography of him. Why? Until recently, when you crossed the Berlin Wall on the way into East Berlin you were confronted with a perspex tablet, on which was written, in red:

BERTOLT BRECHT:
Great Carthage
sought three wars.
It was still mighty
after the first,
still habitable
after the second.
It was no longer to be found
after the third.

This advertisement for the peaceful intentions of the German Democratic Republic was set out as a poem. But it is not a poem. It is the censored remnant of an "Open Letter to German artists and writers" in which (in 1951) Brecht appealed for the peaceful reunification of Germany, and, in that cause, for freedom from censorship. When I carried a volume containing this Letter into the Friedrichstrasse checkpoint, it was confiscated.

East Germany has turned Brecht into the Berlin Wall of German literature. The Class Enemy, writes the current head of the Berliner Ensemble, Manfred Wekwerth, must necessarily be a Brecht Enemy. For this reason alone, it is understandable that no German scholar, East or West, has yet managed to scale the Wall - to see Brecht steadily and to see him whole. Moreover, partly because of censorship by Brecht's literary executors, a very significant portion of his poetry was only published last year (reviewed in the *TLS*, May 27, 1983). A major selection of his letters was first published in 1981.

Ronald Hayman therefore begins with two great advantages: his cultural and political distance from the subject, and the availability of (we trust) most of the previously unpublished sources. His achievement is to give us the facts of Brecht's life more fully and fairly than any previous biographer. Yet, surprisingly, he does not refer at all to the important 1982 supplementary volumes of Brecht's poetry. Moreover, when it comes to the interpretation of German texts and context, his cultural and political distance becomes a grave liability. There are vital dimensions of Brecht's life and work which he simply does not explore.

Brecht was a contrary and elusive (not to say evasive) character. By the age of twenty the Augsburg lout poet was already a great explorer: plundering books, friends and women for his own stimulation and advantage, like the pirate heroes of his early verses and short stories. Caught between two mistresses, Paula Banholzer and Marianne Zoff, he seriously proposed to appease the latter by "singing" her his son by the former. Ruthless opportunism would remain a hallmark of his career to the well-known end: enthroned in East Berlin, with a West German publisher, Austrian passport, and Swiss bank account, "the good", he counselled his son Stefan, "to be a poet". We can soon understand why Stefan would remark that Brecht was one of the few people who deserved the death sentence. "In fact I can imagine doing it to him myself," (Brecht, for his part, would have excused Orwell: "If necessary I would kill - yes, I would kill him.")

Yet this outrageous literary and sexual life, exercised an extraordinary charm. When, like his early hero, Wedekind, he sang his own ballads in a high, brittle voice, accompanying himself on the guitar, the young poet was apparently irresistible. At first he was overwhelmed with an insupportable mixture of awe and desire; that he had never previously looked at a woman being that what was happening now was a revelation. "The best beating in that room was not the pressure of the hand on the heart, it was the play of love." "Give him to me as

acted as one of the four agitators and as a

The poet and the butcher

"All this", Hayman nicely comments, "without a word of conversation". Only in America did the charm fail - for the magic was in his language. In the German-speaking world even his detractors had soon to acknowledge his original poetic gift. "The monster has talent", said Thomas Mann, sadly. The misquotation of what is probably Brecht's most famous line - "Erst kommt das Fressen, dann kommt die Moral" - is but the crassest example of Hayman's recurrent deafness to the magic of Brecht's German.

The central challenge for the biographer of Brecht, however, must be the relationship between his politics and his art. What were the sources of his commitment to communism? What was the nature of that commitment and how did it change? How did it affect his work, and how does it affect our judgment of it? Here Hayman is at his weakest. It is simply not true, for instance, that in 1924-5 "millions of Germans were adapting to circumstances and suppressing their opinions by joining the Nazi party" - a statement which he implausibly links to

member of the Control Chorus." He would not, however, allow public performances because (as he wrote to a would-be producer in the same year) experience had shown that it achieved "nothing but moral passions (*Affekte*) of a commonly lesser kind" in the audience. To the end of his life he would maintain that in principle the end - communism - justified the means - killing, lies, injustice - being used by the governments he supported.

There is abundant evidence that Brecht considered himself, above all, a true and consistent Leninist.

Unermüdlich lobt der Denkende
Den Genossen Lenin...
(Tirelessly the thinking man praises / Comrade Lenin) begins one of the previously unpublished poems from c 1930, and goes on to praise Lenin for not being afraid to get his hands dirty. In the same period he rebuked the revisionist Marxist, Karl Korsch, for wanting "to cut the umbilical cord of Leninist ideology and for placing too much faith in the proletariat". Twenty years later, in the *Buckow Elegies*, he



One of Caspar Neher's many sketches of Brecht.

the theme of *Mann ist Mann*. He entirely misses the significance of Berlin's traumatic May Day 1929, when a virtual civil war broke out between police (controlled by a Social Democratic city government) and communist demonstrators. This "Bloody May" galvanized even the young Auden, who was in Berlin at the time, and John Willmet has plausibly suggested that this was the moment of definite commitment for Brecht - 1929 being the year of the first *Lehrstücke*. Later, Hayman uncritically relays Brecht's wholly lop-sided account of the failure of the SPD and KPD to unite against the Nazis. Berlin in the years 1929 to 1932 was a city where writers, like everyone else, could hardly avoid taking sides (as did, in the end, even Thomas Mann - up to a point). This pressing historical context, this sense of a world falling apart, is essential to an understanding of Brecht's politics.

Brecht was unique only in the ferocity of his commitment and the talent which he placed in its service. Having embraced communism he rushed to spell out its most radical moral implications in *Die Massnahme* ("The Measures Taken").

What base act would you not commit, to eradicate baseness?
If, at last, you could change the world, what
Would you think yourself too good for?
Who are you?
Sink into filth
Embrace the butcher, but
Change the world: it needs it!

Die Massnahme argues precisely those ethical conclusions from Marxism (from which it is possible to draw other conclusions) and Leninism (from which it is almost impossible to draw other conclusions) which would be used to justify all the atrocities of Stalinism in Brecht's lifetime. It uncannily anticipates the Moscow Trials.

It is a remarkable fact that Brecht never explicitly disowned the morality of the "Measures Taken". In 1956, Hayman reports, "he told me that I was not entitled to criticise the play's moral values until I had acted as one of the four agitators and as a

member of the Control Chorus." He would not, however, allow public performances because (as he wrote to a would-be producer in the same year) experience had shown that it achieved "nothing but moral passions (*Affekte*) of a commonly lesser kind" in the audience. To the end of his life he would maintain that in principle the end - communism - justified the means - killing, lies, injustice - being used by the governments he supported.

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dox, then this was a characteristic piece of irresponsible talk. But the irresponsibility is hard to forgive, for this was not - in Orwell's phrase - a kind of playing with fire by people who did not even know that fire was hot. Brecht knew that the fire was hot - and (unlike Auden) went on playing with it.

It is none the less clear from his poems and *Arbeitsjournal*, and from his conversations with Walter Benjamin, that in the period of Scandinavian exile he was deeply troubled by the purges which engulfed his Russian teachers and acquaintances: Meyerhold, Tretyakov, the journalist Michael Koltsov. In 1938 he told Benjamin that there existed a "justifiable suspicion" about what was happening in Russia. "Should the suspicion prove correct one day, then it will become necessary to fight the regime, and publicly. But, 'unfortunately or God be praised, whichever you prefer', the suspicion is not yet a certainty." "For Marxists outside" (the Soviet Union), he confided to his *Arbeitsjournal* in January 1939, "there follows roughly the attitude of Marx to German Social Democracy. *positiv kritisch*." In September 1939 he struggled to justify to himself the Nazi-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact and the Soviet invasion of Poland. ("The governments / Write Non-Aggression-Pacts. Little man / Write your Will!" he had written one year earlier. He certainly did not intend to risk his own neck in the job which he was offered at the Moscow Arts Theatre. It was America for him.

When Hitler invaded the Soviet Union, he, like so many others, silenced his doubts with a sigh of relief. In American exile, from 1941 to 1947, he had more immediate political concerns: the struggle against fascism, trying to make a name on Broadway and money in Hollywood, facing the House Committee on Un-American Activities. But when, after failing to secure the theatre he wanted in Switzerland or Austria, he finally settled for East Berlin, he could no longer avoid the problem. Now the Measures were being Taken all around him. The Party began to demand that he, too, should write to order. His attempts to do so were tragically inept. When West German police at the Harburg border, crossing harassed a group of young communists returning from the East, Brecht sat down to write his dire political cantata, *Der Herrburger Brecht*. A sample verse: Zu Herrburg hinterm Schlagbaum Beginn der Bonner Staat Blühende streichen schnuppernd Um Fallgrub und Stachelndraht. (At Harburg behind the turnpike / The Bonn state begins / Bloodhounds prowling, snuffling / Around fall-pit and barbed wire.) Hayman notes: "Brecht could not understand why they [the communist authorities] objected to his carefully calculated condemnation of the West German authorities for blocking freedom of movement between the two halves of Germany." By early 1953 the Berliner Ensemble was poorly regarded by the Party leadership. Brecht wrote despondently in his *Arbeitsjournal* that reviews did not appear until "months after the first night". He had still not been given the Theater am Schiffbauerdamm for which he had all along been begging.

Then came the workers' uprising of June 17. While workers were being killed by Soviet tanks, Brecht dashed off letters of support to the Party leader, Ulbricht, and the Minister-President, Crotewohl. Four days later *Neues Deutschland* printed the last sentence of his letter to Ulbricht: "I feel the need, in this moment, to express to you my solidarity (*Verbundenheit*) with the Socialist Unity Party of Germany" - as if it was the full text of his message. A chorus of indignation rose from the West. This is perhaps the most controversial moment in Brecht's political career, and mystery has long surrounded what he actually wrote. According to at least two independent sources, the respected Swiss journalist, Gody Suter, and the German writer, Alfred Kantorowicz, this sentence was the censored remnant of a long, subtle and critical epistle - a view accepted by the most sensitive explorer of this minefield, Martin Esslin. Yet in the 1981 edition of the *Brieftage* (published by Suhrkamp, but edited in the Bertolt Brecht Archive in East Berlin), the letter to Ulbricht has only two more sentences: History will give the revolutionary importance of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany its respect. The

lines

Upwards with the bacteria

John Durant

FRED HOYLE
The Intelligent Universe
256pp. Michael Joseph. £12.95.
07181 22984

A few weeks ago the journal *Nature* suggested that Sir Fred Hoyle had been unjustly overlooked in this year's Nobel Prize awards. The prize for physics had gone to the astronomer William Fowler who, "generous man that he is, would probably have been happier if he and his old collaborator had been joint prize-winners". Pointing out that Hoyle tended to be "over-subversive" of scientific orthodoxies, *Nature* hinted that his failure to win a prize might be related to his recent advocacy of "the unnecessary theory that living things on the surface of the earth originally arrived from intergalactic space".

In many ways, Fred Hoyle has been the Geoffrey Boycott of post-war British science. Like that other Yorkshireman, he has contributed far more to his profession than most and yet found it impossible to get along amicably with the majority of his colleagues. Indeed, while Boycott has at least managed to retain the loyalty of a vociferous minority of personal supporters, for some years Hoyle has retained only one – his former student, now Professor of Astronomy at University College, Cardiff, Chandra Wickramasinghe. Between them, Hoyle and Wickramasinghe have published a string of books challenging first one and then another of the basic tenets of modern cosmology. Not merely the "Big Bang" (which Hoyle has never accepted) but also conventional theories of the nature of comets and inter-stellar dust grains, the Haldane/Oparin model of the origin of life, and the Darwinian theory of evolution: all these have been rejected in favour of a radical model of the universe according to which organic life is nothing less than the product of a (or a series of) extraterrestrial intelligence(s). These somehow engineer the production in inter-stellar space of enormous quantities of organisms and gene fragments, a small proportion of which then rain down upon the earth to fuel both the evolutionary process and (rather less helpfully) to cause infectious disease.

This extraordinary model is the subject of Hoyle's latest book, *The Intelligent Universe*. Characteristically, this is a whistle-stop tour of cosmology and evolutionary theory in which

new and unconventional ideas are piled on top of one another at an almost bewildering rate. Writing with the moral indignation of one who believes himself to be up against a conservative and conspiratorial establishment, and who consequently does not expect a fair hearing, Hoyle dismisses one piece of "orthodox science" after another, replacing each with ingenious alternatives that pop up from page to page like so many rabbits out of a conjurer's hat. Inter-stellar dust grains are not inorganic silicates but rather bacteria; and these will explain not only the background radiation (allegedly the best proof of the Big Bang) but also the gaps in the fossil record and the pattern of infectious diseases in Oxford schools. Thoughts such as these (and there are many more) are either brilliant or barmy, and Hoyle leaves us in no doubt about which of these alternatives the scientific community as a whole will adopt. Somewhat regrettably (it's always nice to be able to defend a persecuted minority, after all) I have to say that on this occasion the scientific community will be right.

My objection to Hoyle's views is not that they are unorthodox but (what is far more surprising in a theoretician of his stature) that they are so poorly argued. Take first his objections to orthodoxy. Against the generally accepted theory of the origin of life, for example, Hoyle brings only one serious argument, namely that living organisms are too complex to have been produced by chance. Indeed, he claims that their information content is so great that the chances of their being produced from their component parts in single random trials

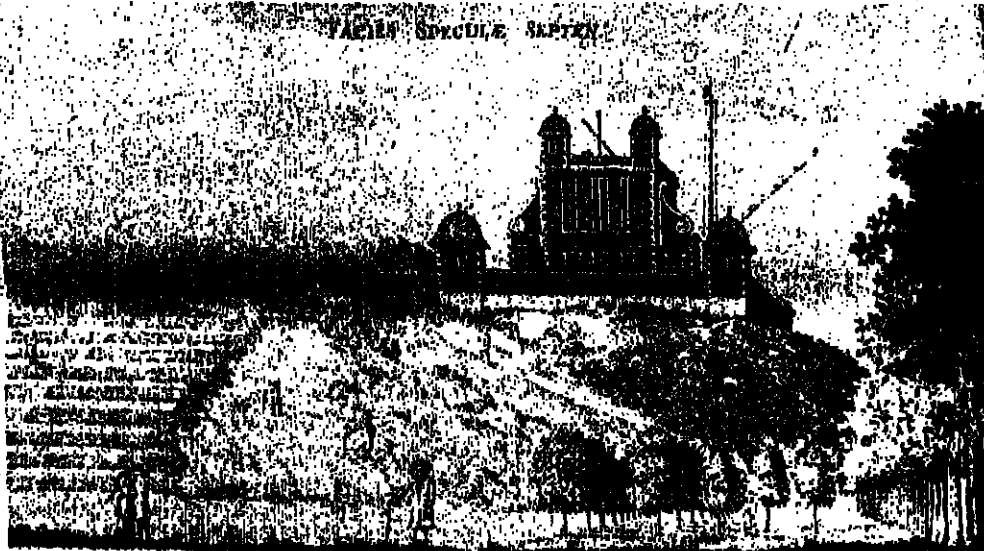
are about as good as the chances of a Boeing 747 being spontaneously re-assembled from its component parts by a whirlwind blowing through a junkyard. This is impressive but irrelevant, however, since the conventional view of the origin of life does not suggest that organisms (or even the macromolecules of which they are made) were produced from their component parts by single random trials. Rather, it suggests that they evolved from exceedingly simple replicative systems through many successive stages, each of which was preserved by natural selection. As Francis Crick's excellent book *Life Itself* has recently made clear, this theory is very weak, since we know very little about the actual course of the process, or when and where it first occurred; but despite its empirical weakness, the theory is not to be dismissed by simplistic calculations directed at some other idea that no one actually accepts.

Hoyle's failure properly to address the conventional theory of the origin of life stems from a manifest misunderstanding of the theory of natural selection, which he ludicrously caricatures as "a truism of [a] minor order". Indeed, it is sad to have to say that the entire chapter on Darwinism reads more like the feeble meanderings of a latter-day fundamentalist than like the work of a major scientist. If this seems harsh, consider Hoyle's assertion that "the copying of DNA seems to be remarkably accurate – not very helpful to the modern form of the Darwinian theory". In fact, the remarkably accurate copying of DNA is a precondition for evolution; and mutation rates are both

well characterized and perfectly consistent with observed rates of genetic change. Or again, what is one to make of the throwaway suggestion that the nineteenth-century discovery of the fossil record of increasing stature in horses was "of little relevance" to evolution, "since it concerned animals possessing basically the same genetic structure. Besides which, such sequences could have involved external factors – nutrition for example." The mind boggles, not only at the wisdom that is capable of determining the genetic structure of fossils, but also at the kind of diet that is capable of turning a four-toed browser the size of a small dog into a one-toed grazing horse – could it perhaps have been spinach?

If Hoyle's arguments against orthodoxy are weak, those in favour of "evolution by cosmic control" are no better. While the question of whether life originated on earth or elsewhere in the galaxy is still open, the evidence that inter-stellar dust-clouds are composed of bacteria is almost as thin as the dust-clouds themselves, and that for the role of these bacteria (and other as yet undetected viral and genetic fragments) in terrestrial evolution is even rarer. Hoyle would have us believe that space is a more plausible source for boarding-school influenza epidemics than person-to-person contact. All that we need is a minor extension of this approach to cover genital Herpes and other similar complaints and a large number of worried husbands are going to have an enormous weight lifted from their minds.

More seriously, it is clear that Hoyle's determination to involve cosmic genes in the drama of terrestrial evolution is underpinned by substantial metaphysical commitments. Driven away from the "nihilistic" theory of evolution by natural selection, which he blames for a whole series of militaristic excesses up to and including the imminent destruction of humankind by thermonuclear war, Hoyle seeks refuge in a cosmic teleology which is as close to Aristotle as it is to John Ray or William Paley. Organic life, we are told, is somehow being drawn onwards and upwards by an indefinable intelligence, an Aristotelian "final cause" acting backwards in time by a neat reversal of the cosmic clock. The fact that the very considerable successes of modern science have largely depended upon the rejection of final causes bothers Hoyle not at all; and in a universe of quarks and quantum indeterminism, who is to say that in the end he may not be proved right? If he is, however, I predict that it will be by arguments considerably better than those contained in *The Intelligent Universe*.



The Royal Observatory in the seventeenth century; an engraving reproduced from the sixth, revised edition of Patrick Moore's *History of Astronomy* (327pp. Macdonald. £14.95. 0356 086070).

Selection methods

Frederick B. Churchill

PETER J. BOWLER
The Eclipse of Darwinism: Anti-Darwinian Evolution Theories in the Decades around 1900
291pp. Johns Hopkins University Press.
£19.50.
08018 29321

Last year the world of science and letters celebrated the centenary of the death of Charles Darwin. Scholars have calculated that over seventy-five scientific and historical symposia were held around the world in his honour. Few will be able to assimilate the flood of essays that issues from this display of homage, and even the more ardent participants of this "Darwin Industry" will sample only a fraction of the deluge. 1983 now brings more works on Darwin, Darwinism, neo-Darwinism, or some combination of the three. Why more, the weary reader might ask?

The answer must lie partly in the complexity and richness of evolution theory, as a continuing biological problem, as a field for historical research, and as a domain of natural philosophy that impinges directly upon the human condition. *The Eclipse of Darwinism* contributes principally to the second of these areas but also sheds light on both of the others. Peter Bower has earlier written a widely respected account of nineteenth-century paleontology and is the author of numerous monographs on specialized topics in the history of biology. In this new book he examines a period around

the turn of the century, of the history of evolution theory that has been almost totally neglected. Those turbulent years included the centennial of Darwin's birth and semi-centennial of *The Origin of Species*, prompting the first wave of Darwinian reflections. Whereas today's critics are merely sniping at modern neo-Darwinism in order to modify its dominant stance, most of the celebrators in 1909 behaved as undertakers assembled to bury the Darwinian theory.

Bowler presents us with three *fin-de-siècle* scientific strategies for replacing Darwin's mechanism of natural selection. The most highly touted, at least in the popular literature, was associated with Lamarck. The neo-Lamarckians confined themselves to only one aspect of Lamarck's thoughts, but this they extended and refashioned far beyond its original form. They claimed that induced somatic traits could be transmitted to future generations. Their problem was to devise a satisfactory theory of heredity to explain how such purposeful adaptations could be impressed upon the germinal material, and so passed on to descendants. Two generations of neo-Lamarckians laboured in the defence of this point of view. Samuel Butler, Ewald Hering, Eugenio Rignano, and Richard Semon tried to establish a similarity between heredity and the mental phenomenon of memory. Others, such as George Huxley, Brown-Sequard, Joseph Cunningham, and above all, Paul Kammerer, concentrated on demonstrating experimentally that induced traits were, indeed, transmitted. In both cases, Bowler discerns an increasing tendency towards the rejection of the

inherent in the Lamarckian strategy.

The second general strategy dispensed with the evident purposefulness in organic form and concentrated on a perceived unilinear pattern in evolution. "Orthogenesis" was the term coined by Wilhelm Haeckel in 1893 to characterize the belief that developmental mechanisms must alter the germ-plasm of successive generations in a biased manner. Bowler describes how the German naturalist, Theodor Eimer, the brilliant English polymath, D'Arcy Wentworth Thompson, and the American biochemist, L. J. Henderson, all in different ways called upon orthogenetic processes to explain animal form. Since the consequence of sustained internal or external pressures would be the phylogenetic sequences recorded in the fossil record, palaeontologists in particular focused on this strategy. American palaeontologists, including Edward Drinker Cope, Alpheus Hyatt, and later, Henry Fairfield Osborn, combined aspects of both orthogenesis and neo-Lamarckism. Bowler finds that both strategies were easily adapted to satisfy pent-up desires for a theistic interpretation of evolution.

The third alternative to natural selection was the mutation theory pioneered by the Dutch botanist, Hugo de Vries, and accepted by a number of early geneticists, such as William Bateson and T. H. Morgan. One appealing feature of invoking sudden leaps from one species to another was that these corresponded with persistent discontinuities found in the fossil record. With a theory of "hopeful monsters" the geneticist Richard Goldschmidt argued that embryology supported the concept of

trans-specific evolutionary saltations. Bowler finds that both orthogenetic and mutationist theories tended to rely upon idealistic formulae surviving from a pre-Darwinian age.

Throughout the book Bowler casts further glances at the current biological controversies, as if to suggest that there may, indeed, be lessons we can learn from the past. He also makes clear that contemporary fundamentalists, who claim that evolution and creationism are mutually exclusive, are guilty of bad history and poor logic. In a summarizing thirteen-page section he recounts how natural selection came back into vogue in the form of the modern evolutionary synthesis.

In many ways this book is an exciting addition to the history of evolutionary theory. Bowler examines a mass of complicated and often abstruse, turn-of-the-century literature. He organizes its contents into three manageable categories and ably describes associated hybrid versions. What is more, he decisively establishes that many of the alternative neo-Darwinism were plausible given the state of biology at the time. He makes an effort throughout his examination to connect up their philosophical underpinnings. He points out, moreover, how each of the principal strategies contained conceptual and methodological shortcomings that only the advance of modern biology would reveal. This book is not an easy reading for those who want to descend from the lofty level of the history of scientific ideas; but for others it will fill a gap created by our preoccupation with the science of the mid-nineteenth century and the neo-Darwinism of the 1940s and beyond.

Ideas, and who had them

Stefan Collini

ALAN BULLOCK and R. B. WOODINGS
(Editors)
The Fontana Biographical Companion to Modern Thought
800pp. Collins. £15.95 (paperback, Fontana, 1983).
0 00 216329 2

The first thing to be said is that for certain limited purposes this is a very useful compilation indeed. It is designed as a complement to the *Fontana Dictionary of Modern Thought*, edited by Lord Bullock and the late Oliver Sollybrass and published in 1978, but it is also a valuable work of reference in its own right; indeed, it is arguably more valuable than its companion volume since lives are somewhat more amenable to dictionary treatment than are ideas. The format consists of short entries, usually around 200-300 words long, giving the necessary minimum of biographical information and a summary – "inkling" might be a better word in some cases – of the ideas or achievement for which the subject is best known. There are over 1,900 entries between Aalto and Zwicky, spanning the entire range of twentieth-century thought and culture (and sometimes a bit further), entries which are the work of some three hundred, largely academic, contributors distributed across the relevant fields.

The best of the entries pack a remarkably large amount of information into a small space, and they all provide date and place of birth and, where applicable, death, full publication details of major writings, helpful cross-references to other entries, and, where available, the titles of one or two sources in which the subject's life or work is treated more fully. This factual information seemed entirely reliable in the handful of cases where I was able to check it against another authority, and for such a large book – over 800 double-column pages – there seem to be very few misprints, though one or two of these are of the dangerously plausible variety (the title of Saul Bellow's most recent novel, for example, is given as *The Dean's Daughter* rather than *The Dean's December*).

The details are commendably up to date, with several 1983 deaths recorded. Finally, the volume's handiness is increased by the provision of a classified index in which the 1,945 names are arranged into some sixty subject categories. So, whether your interest is in checking the dates of publication of well-known and not so well-known books or in settling disputes about the first names of famous and not so famous figures, or more ambitiously, in distinguishing Hans Fischer, "German organic chemist", from Hermann Bad Fischer, "German organic chemist", and both from Ernst Otto Fischer, "German chemist", then this is the book to have beside you. As a comparatively cheap one-volume work of basic reference in this area the *Fontana Biographical Companion* has no serious rival.

It cannot also be said that the terms "modern" and "modernism" have been confined very generously. The editors' declared aim has been to confine themselves to those who produced "at least some of their significant work" in the twentieth century, so that we have, for example, Thomas Hardy (b. 1830) but not Oscar Wilde (b. 1854), and so on. Exceptions are made for those "who by dates belong securely to the nineteenth century but whose achievements were only made available or adequately recognized, in this century, by contributions to modern thought". To what category might seem to be asking for trouble, though the editors have in practice been very sparing in its use: a work of this kind would hardly be regarded as incomplete if it did not include an entry on Marx (German socialist scientist and revolutionary), and presumably not many readers will dispute the inclusion of Boole, Kierkegaard and Mendel. Charles Babbage, who is actually classified as "modern", born a century too soon, seems a not too easy reading for those who want to descend from the lofty level of the history of scientific ideas; but for others it will fill a gap created by our preoccupation with the science of the mid-nineteenth century and the neo-Darwinism of the 1940s and beyond.

be "computer scientists".

In fact, "thought" has been interpreted even more broadly than "modern", so that the range of entries may take some readers by surprise. All the obvious categories are covered, with the natural sciences being given particularly full treatment by the standards of such general reference-books, which normally tend to be better adapted to the humanities: in terms of its own classifications, the present volume contains, for instance, 103 "physicists" and eighty-seven "chemists" compared to a mere fifty-nine "philosophers". The arts are also well covered, with – to take just the largest categories – 112 "painters and sculptors", and eighty-seven writers under "Literature (British)" alone. More disturbingly, the most populous single category proves to be "politicians, statesmen and soldiers" (164), and, moving still further away from the conventional understanding of "thought", there are "those remarkable figures whose work has redefined the lifestyles and the stock of aspirations available", such as fashion designers and rock musicians. Perhaps "modern culture" was ruled out as a title by the requirement of symmetry with the companion volume. At all events, this means that among the distinguished contributors to "modern thought" are Marilyn Monroe and Coco Chanel, Jimi Hendrix and Idi Amin, Chester Carlson (inventor of the Xerox) and Paul Poirer (inventor of the bra), and (though in separate categories) John Wayne and Ronald Reagan. Lord Melbourne thought it a virtue of the Order of the Garter that there was "no damned nonsense about merit" involved: one occasionally detects a modern version of that sentiment at work in the selection here. To have "become indelibly part . . . of modern consciousness" is what counts: impact is all (Wernher von Braun is in, too), and no doubt those with more austere tastes in these matters will feel that this represents too much a Sunday colour supplement view of "modern thought".

There are some notable variations in the style of the entries, and these clearly owe more to the inclinations of different contributors than to the comparative tractability of their subjects. In terms of length, von Braun, at under a hundred words, is one of the shortest; while Durkheim, who gets over a thousand words, ranks, by this purely mechanical test, as the most important modern thinker, though perhaps Daniel Bell, who wrote the Durkheim entry, enjoyed special licence as a result of his unique (as far as I can see) status as both contributor and subject. Some are helpfully full on biographical details (that Bergson was married to Proust's cousin may not be a trivial fact), others unreasonably silent about them (we learn not a single fact about Erich Auerbach's life other than the details of his birth and death, not even anything about the extraordinary circumstances under which he wrote *Mimesis*). Some are outspoken (Gaitskell was the beneficiary of "that tradition of party loyalty for which the Labour Party was once so distinguished"), some disingenuous (Billy Graham was "in no way aggressive except to sin"), some strained (of Firbank's novels: "The final impression is of evanescent lives engraved in steel"), some simply opaque ("For Althusser, Marxism was neither a world-view nor a 'philosophy' nor an ideology, but the revolutionary science of history conceived as class struggle. Less comprehensibly, it was philosophy as the 'practice of the production of concepts', or the 'theory of theoretical practice'." No doubt that "less comprehensibly" is a nicely "auto-critical" touch, but it is not really what one comes to reference books for.)

Despite what this last example may suggest about the difficulty of giving a clear and concise summary of complex abstract theories, several of the entries on philosophers are outstandingly good – informative, lucid, and often spiced with just that dash of tart judgment which reveals a genuine intellectual engagement with the subject. This is true for entries on figures as different as Kierkegaard and Russell, where in each case life and work are illuminatingly interwoven, while several others contain phrases which are both memorable and appropriate, as in the description of G. B. Moore's "rustic incredulity in the face of the kind of acceptance which maintains that we do not know anything for certain about material things", or in the remark that Royce's "idea

that the approved knowledge of a period is a leading device for the exercise of power over those whom it brands as deviant carries some tremulous hint of emancipating the oppressed", or more simply in the characterization of Jaspers' ineffable notion of "pure being" as "in effect God disguised in plain clothes".

Inevitably, all readers will, like Lear and Cordelia, want to talk of "who loses and who wins; who's in, who's out"; as with anthologies, it is one of the chief pleasures of browsing in such a work. The editors of this volume have followed the adventurous cricket captain's rule of "when in doubt, put 'em in", and with so many entries it is unlikely that many readers will feel that any really obvious candidates have been left out. Nearer the margins, there is, of course, ample room for dispute: why, for example, have the "French novelist" Marguerite Duras but not Marguerite Yourcenar, why the "Australian poet" Judith Wright but not A. D. Hope, why the "German/American political scientist" Carl Friedrich but not Leo Strauss (though, revealingly, we have the "German/American clothing manufacturer" Levi Strauss), why the "politician" Harold Macmillan but not Harold Wilson, and so on.

But this game only has any serious intellectual interest where the pattern of inclusions and omissions seems both systematic and disputable, and here each reader is likely to have to confine himself to the field he is best acquainted with. In the case of historians, the selection does sometimes seem a little parochial, with the doubtful virtue that the parish is Paris. No one, presumably, would want to quarrel with the inclusion of Bloch, Febvre and Braudel, but one could be forgiven for drawing the conclusion from some of the other entries that a connection with the *Annales* school is a qualification for inclusion. Thus, Labrousse "has some claim to be regarded as the *éminentissime* of the *Annales* school", while Duby's "blend of caution and imagination and his interest in the social sciences as well as his concern for rural history, make him the true heir of

Marc Bloch"; Lopez is "a sympathiser with the *Annales* movement since the days of Marc Bloch and Febvre", while Pirenne's influence "lives on in the French journal *Annales*"; Ariès works "in the tradition of Marc Bloch and Febvre", while Le Roy Ladurie has "transformed the French historical journal *Annales*", and so on. The omissions among historians also seem very disputable: there is Hans Baron but no Herbert Butterfield, W. G. Hoskins but no G. M. Trevelyan, C. E. Labrousse but no M. M. Postan. There is even a suggestion that only the right kind of French historian need apply, for we are given Georges Lefebvre (who "together with M. Bloch and Febvre . . . developed the history of mentalities in France"), but not his almost exact contemporary, Elie Halévy. Simply from the Sunday newspaper reader's point of view the selection may sometimes seem a bit puzzling: E. P. Thompson but no A. J. P. Taylor, Frances Yates but no Hugh Trevor-Roper. Certainly what is said of Yates – "A sturdy empiricist who denied having any method . . . her greatest strength lay in the combination of a concern for the documents with an almost visionary historical imagination" – could be said of several no less distinguished historians who are excluded, and raises the suspicion that a certain fashionableness of subject-matter has been allowed a disproportionate weight.

This may, however, be a defect inseparable from the genre of pocket guides. There is an inescapable whiggishness about such cultural *Widens*, where a particular interpretation of the cultural present determines the selection of the relevant ancestors. While this tendency is, *ex hypothesi*, not entirely absent from the *Fontana Biographical Companion*, its very range – the variety of contributors as well as fields – constitutes a corrective to any sectarian character which such a volume might otherwise be in danger of assuming, and it will be a dogmatically unresponsive or astonishingly erudite reader who does not find something interesting and useful in its fact-packed pages.

Beowulf

The Poem and Its Tradition
JOHN D. NILES

A new study of *Beowulf* which analyses the poem's style, meaning and historical context. Arguing that much of its character is derived from the oral tradition of Anglo-Saxon heroic verse, John Niles interprets the work as a song to be performed before an audience, not as a text to be read by clerics. Postulating a tenth-century date for *Beowulf*, he views the poem as an expression of a sophisticated poetic tradition of the post-Viking age.

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edited by ROBERT KIELY
Harvard English Studies, II

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Managing the money

J. H. C. Leach

JERRY COAKLEY and LAURENCE HARRIS
The City of Capital: London's Role as a Financial Centre
247pp. Oxford: Blackwell. £17 (paperback, £6.50).
0631 128050

For a number of reasons this thoughtful and scrupulously argued book may receive less attention than it deserves. It is therefore worth stressing that the case which it makes out "against" the City is put with moderation, and that Jerry Coakley and Laurence Harris recognize both that some of their arguments may not be fully supported by the evidence and that there is often a case to be made on the other side – a case, indeed, which they are careful to advance themselves even if they do not accept it.

The book is subtitled *London's Role as a Financial Centre*. This perhaps is slightly misleading in that there is next to no discussion of the Stock Exchange and none at all of the major changes (negotiated commissions and the possible eventual abandonment of the "single-capacity" role of brokers and jobbers) which that institution faces, and which do indeed mean that the City "stands at the crossroads" – a phrase which the authors use more than once without saying, except by implication, what they mean.

The case which Coakley and Harris make out concerns the City's powers, which they regard as being so great – especially where interest rates and the exchange rate are concerned – as to affect the whole UK economy. And this situation is exacerbated by the great and growing importance of the Eurodollar market to the City. Here of course one has to ask – as indeed the authors do – whether the City affects the economy or the economy affects what happens in the City. If inflation of wages and prices is running at 20 per cent per

annum, then holders of sterling are likely to be nervous and interest rates are likely to be high even without any special activity on the part of foreign exchange dealers. Again, the authors are worried about the size and growing power of pension funds, which they see as investing more and more overseas instead of being used "fruitfully" at home, perhaps in the "regeneration" of British industry. But it is perhaps no less likely that these are effects of the ending of exchange controls and the abolition of the dollar premium in 1979 rather than a permanent diversion overseas of a high percentage of the money available for new investment. This remains to be seen.

It is clear that Coakley and Harris consider the unregulated nature of much of the City's activities – especially the offshore, multinational aspect – not only as a real threat to the UK's autonomy in economic matters, but also as leading to the risk of a disastrous banking crisis – and to mean that pension fund managers devote too little money to worthy objects via domestic securities. But what is a manager to do? It is his responsibility to invest so as to secure, over a period, the highest total return that is compatible with an acceptable, rather small, degree of risk. If North Sea Oil, computer software, body-scanners and commercial television appear to have better prospects than the declining British Smokestacks Ltd, then he will put his money in the former rather than the latter: indeed, he has a clear duty to do so. As for banking crises, the authors fully recognize and document the "sovereign risks" which lie over so many bankers' heads; and here it is possible to indict bankers for greed (though Coakley and Harris refrain from doing so), just as it was in the great salad-oil swindle of 1963, when bankers – especially American ones – made loans on the "security" of more salad oil than existed in the world's entire stocks. "Sovereign risk" has been underestimated, but I doubt whether the City should be allotted more than a minor percentage of the blame.

The most controversial part of the book will

be found in its conclusion, which is no less than a full-blooded recommendation to nationalize the City, or at least large parts of it. This is why the book may not receive its due attention; the sheer implausibility and unfortunate timing of such a recommendation, at the opening of the new term of a Conservative government bent on "privatizing" much of what is at present in public ownership, could well lead to its unjustified neglect, especially in the City, which is essentially a "reactive" rather than "reflective" arena. And it is a pity that the authors do not give any consideration to the value of the City's "invisible earnings" nor ask themselves the implications of why the Eurodollar market came to be established in London. Nationalize the City and you will find (I suspect) that the Eurodollar market will be relocated, the invisible earnings will dwindle and many of the 400 or so overseas banks at present in the City will find more agreeable and profitable pastures. In any case, what does it mean to say "nationalize the pension funds"? As the authors observe, no fewer than seven of the top ten UK pension funds are already for public sector employees, and their investment policies could, presumably, be determined without undue difficulty from Whitehall. But this is, under existing circumstances, to conduct an irrelevant debate.

In a number of ways, one may infer that Coakley and Harris enjoy only a limited familiarity with the City. They give more importance to the building societies than would most people; it is odd to name *Royal Dutch Shell* as Britain's third largest company; the UK stock market is no longer the second largest in the

world, at least for equities; BSR does not stand for British but Birmingham Sound Reproducers; Dunlop-Pirelli is an unfortunate and outdated example of a dual-nationality multinational; the receivership of Stone-Plate is discussed, but that of Rolls-Royce – equally interesting – is not; FNPC (First National Finance Corporation) is surprisingly omitted from the list of crashed secondary banks. The authors tend to attribute more homogeneity to the entities comprising the City than would its practitioners (but, to be fair, they themselves admit this), and do not always consider the very real conflicts of interest that can arise between brokers and merchant bankers, or between the latter and the clearing banks. The discount houses do not even rate an entry in the useful index. The account of the collapse of Banco Ambrosiano is very far from complete. At a more petty level, I noticed a number of misprints, of which only one – "plastic and banking", which I conjecturally emend to "plastic card banking" (p125) – is serious.

The book's arguments – perhaps especially in the valuable discussion of the Eurodollar market – are well and cogently supported by a number of tables, and it will be surprising if readers fail to find at least some of the authors' theses worthy of consideration and to have some of their preconceptions salutarily shaken. One does not have to agree with their recommendations to welcome *The City of Capital* and to learn from it. Who will reply to the accusation that the Eurodollar credit system "greatly reduces the power of democratically elected governments"?

Restarting the motor

Frances Cairncross

LAWRENCE KLEIN
The Economics of Supply and Demand
169pp. Oxford: Blackwell, £15.
0631 131558

Supply-side economics has acquired a bad name. That is mainly the fault of Arthur Laffer, who invented the wondrous Laffer curve. This is a graphic demonstration of the politically appealing proposition that if you cut income tax, it will inspire people to work so much harder that government revenues will actually increase. Alas, the history of the first years of the Thatcher and Reagan governments demonstrates that if you cut income tax, you simply end up with a larger budget deficit than you had been led to expect.

There is, however, an older version of supply-side economics, and it is this more respectable subject which Lawrence Klein explores in his book. It is, as he points out, rather curious that when university students are taught the "law of supply and demand", post-war governments have concentrated so exclusively on regulating aggregate demand. In Alfred Marshall's phrase, both blades of the scissors do the cutting. Managing the supply side of the economy is not the antithesis of managing demand – but the logical corollary.

In any case, demand management alone is quite clearly no longer sufficient to allow us to combine low inflation with a reasonable rate of economic expansion. Ingenious combinations of monetary and fiscal policy may once have been enough to riddle the knobs of economic control, lowering unemployment by a few thousand here, knocking a point or two off inflation there. But that was in the dear dead days of the 1960s. As Professor Klein bleakly observes, "We appear all over the world to be locked into a state of stagflation from which conventional demand-orientated macroeconomic analysis offers little hope of extraction."

Most economists, faced with this reality, do one of two things. Either they pat on with the remedies they have learned in the days when the spirit of Keynes still pervaded the universities – hoping that the world will eventually see sense. Or they grope for some completely new approach to economic analysis. The moderate Klein does neither. He simply wants to see attention to the supply side of the economy grafted on to existing demand-orientated analysis.

This is roughly what he did in the days when he was chief economic adviser to President Carter. He encouraged the administration to pursue policies such as training programmes to improve the quality of the work-force. In his book, he sets out other areas as proper goals for the management of supply – such as youth unemployment (tackled, perhaps, by lowering the minimum wage rate) and the selective de-regulation of energy and food prices.

If these sound rather familiar goals, then that may reflect the influence Klein has already had on economic teaching. His Nobel Prize in 1980 was in part a recognition of his work in drawing attention to the supply side of the economy, and in trying to incorporate it into the economic models on which his reputation is largely based. But to British readers, there is another reason for the familiarity.

Blessed (or perhaps cursed) with a large and efficient public sector and with a legislature which does more or less what it is told, we have had a much longer experience of supply management, even in the days when we did not know that was its proper name. Unlike US governments, British governments have had plenty of opportunities to try out most of Klein's practical policy suggestions – including the incomes policies which he rather nervously proposes as a stop-gap if his other measures of supply management fail to cure stagflation.

The results have not been wildly encouraging. At the end of his book, Professor Klein spells out a programme of detailed measures which, he believes, would solve the twin problems of stagnation and inflation "given a bit of period of gestation – about three or four years". The reader's temptation to "diminish" such a claim as a Lafferism would be greatly reduced if the book had devoted more space to analysing recent attempts at supply management, and to explaining where they had gone wrong.

The Dialogue de Scaccario: The Course of the Exchequer and Constitutio Domini Regis: The Establishment of the Royal Household, edited and translated by Charles Johnson, are reissued with corrections by F. E. L. Carter and D. E. Greenway (208pp. Oxford: University Press, £35. 0 198222688). "Scholar, Why is the [Exchequer] so called? Master, I can think; for the moment, of no better reason than that it resembles a chess-board. Scholar, Was it shape the only reason why our wise forefathers gave it that name? For they might equally well have called it a draught-board. Master, I was justified in calling you 'precise'."

The lust for magnificence

James H. Brumfield

WILLIAM CRAFT BRUMFIELD
Gold in Azure: One Thousand Years of Russian Architecture
200pp. With colour and black-and-white illustrations. Kudos and Godine. £49.50.
1 87821 4369

Of all the major fields of artistic creativity in which Russians have made a contribution to the world, none has been more neglected than architecture. Western scholars have long tended to see the churches of medieval Russia as variants of Byzantium and the palaces of imperial Russia as hybrid transplants from the West. Russians, on the other hand, have tended to play down these precedents either out of ignorance or out of ideological perversity. The Soviet Union since the war has produced a substantial body of politically safe pedantry that generally avoids all but the most interesting questions as well as a body of second-rate popularization that exaggerates Russian uniqueness. No one – in East or West – has yet succeeded in arousing real interest in the subject or even in soberly locating Russian architecture in a proper global context.

One welcomes, therefore, this serious effort by a young scholar to provide a balanced assessment of "one thousand years of Russian architecture". His straightforward historical account begins with the construction of the original Christian churches in Kiev and ends with the public buildings made from prefabricated concrete in the late 1970s. Nearly two-thirds of the book deals with the great churches of pre-Petrine Russia; and the illustrative material from this period would itself make the book worth owning. The soft-colour pictures often include snow, shadows or foliage that lend a special character to these places of worship, but are invariably cut out in the glossy, picture-postcard style of illustration with which we are familiar. An invaluable series of readable, cross-sectional plans make the special features and terminology of Russian church construction intelligible even to the lay reader.

William Craft Brumfield relates architecture essentially to the high history of political leaders in the major power centres. This works particularly well in his detailed account of the programme for building the Petersburg of Peter the Great and his early successors. In his excellent discussion of Andrei Bogolubsky's role in taking Byzantine models north to Vladimir, he points out that the most violent rulers often built the most beautiful churches. The author has a special interest in the development of the decorative richness in Muscovite churches (gables, onion domes, etc) and in the "tent" roof form, whose vertically conceived Moscow under the cruciform of all the transparent materials occurred in the church incorporating the birth of Ivan on the outskirt of Moscow at Kolomenskoe; and the house conquered Red Square itself when Ivan built St Basil's Cathedral to commemorate his victory over the Tatars at Kazan. Brumfield shows that St Basil's is, in fact, more symmetrical and "rational" (with eight chapels in cruciform around a central one) than advocates of Muscovite exceptionalism have been inclined to admit.

He focuses on the rise of the Muscovite style in Moscow itself, where exterior effects gradually prevailed over the interior effects achieved in earlier, timbered churches and where Italian builders arrived to purify Byzantine models within the Kremlin already under Ivan III. He shows how neglected centres like Novgorod (as well as Novgorod) and Zvenigorod (as well as Vladimir) helped prepare the way for the Muscovite style, and he gives us a sweet account of the decline of one of his best-written and most interesting sections dealing with the fiered domes of the so-called Moscow baroque.

In examining himself almost exclusively to the past, and discussing churches in the first half of the book, Brumfield necessarily leaves out a great deal of the entire history of fortress architecture in Russia. By relegating wooden architecture to an appendix at the end, he avoids integrating into his narrative a serious discussion of its important (some believe determining) influence on Muscovite architecture. More serious is his general neglect of the social or ideological context of the buildings considered. The general impression is created that building a church was a more or less constant phenomenon, and that architectural changes resulted mainly from slowly maturing stylistic considerations within Russia, occasionally punctuated by foreign arrivals whose ideas were then "rusted" (a phrase the author takes from Boris Vipper to describe the Russian adoption of foreign models).

Perhaps because he leaves out the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries outside Moscow, the author fails to take notice of a distinctive, recurrent feature of the Russian experience with architecture: a passion for large ensembles that move toward monumentality and even megalomania.

The author describes well the major elements within the two most important pre-Petrine ecclesiastical ensembles (the Monastery of St Sergius at Zagorsk and the Kremlin in Moscow), but gives little sense of how such complexes were increasingly either conceived or restructured to function as part of a broader complex. From at least the time of Ivan the Terrible, for instance, messianic ideas were associated with the Kremlin. Boris Godunov thought of rebuilding it as a model of the New Jerusalem; and the Patriarch Nikon created a Monastery of the New Jerusalem outside Moscow (with a model of the Holy Sepulchre inside it) as a rebuke to the increasing secularization of Muscovy. Although there are beautiful illustrations and diagrams of Nikon's monument, it is described in the text only as "one architectural oddity in the Moscow area that can be partially attributed to Rastrelli". It seems hard to believe that a history of Russian architecture would not even mention perhaps the greatest of all architectural ensembles of pre-Petrine Russia: the great Kremlin at Rostov. Rostov, together with the churches of nearby Yaroslavl, produced the finest architectural monuments of the Russian seventeenth century and the most original examples of the architectural transition from medieval Muscovy to baroque modernity. Even if they cannot be included, they should not be dismissed by inaccurately characterizing them as merely "an elaboration of ideas that had been stated previously in the churches and monasteries of Moscow".

The author captures the lust for magnificence of the new imperial capital at Petersburg with what is in effect a 100-page independent essay on the building of the city from the early eighteenth century to the early nineteenth century. Concentrating properly on Rastrelli, he then proceeds to show how the city was gradually transformed first into a baroque and then into a neo-classical city by a series of remarkable architects including not just the well-known parade of foreigners, but also lesser-known Russians: Andrei Voronikhin, the son of a serf from the Urals, who built the Cathedral of the Kazan Mother of God (now a Museum of Atheism), and Andrei Zakharov, who built the Admiralty that still dominates the skyline of Leningrad today.

Once again, however, an impressive account of individual monuments and of the city as a whole does not adequately convey the role that key buildings played in public ensembles within Petersburg – or illustrate how this ensemble planning which evolved piecemeal within Petersburg was imposed wholesale on provincial cities in the expanding Russian empire (often successfully, as in the great Cathedral Square in Helsinki).

The nineteenth century is treated only incidentally as a period of the decline of classicism and rise of eclecticism. The opportunity is missed to discuss the monumentalist aspirations of the period in which Russia sought to celebrate architecturally the victory over Napoleon. Particularly evident in the rebuilding of Moscow after the burning of the city during Napoleon's occupation, this monumentalism reached its apogee in the work of Constantine Thon in rebuilding the Moscow Kremlin and in the fantasies of Herzen's friend, Alexander Vitberg, for great construction projects in Sparrow (now Lenin) Hills and on Red Square. But neither Thon nor Vitberg is mentioned in this study. The building of St

Isaac's Cathedral (Petersburg's parallel to Thon's long-laboured construction of the largest church in Moscow, the Cathedral of Christ the Saviour) is discussed, but in purely stylistic terms that give no sense of how megalomaniac nationalism under Nicholas I was destroying classicism and in some ways anticipating later, totalitarian architecture.

A short final section on twentieth-century Russian architecture succinctly suggests the richness, variety, and originality of the experimental architecture in Moscow and Leningrad just before the Revolution and throughout the 1920s. Brumfield mentions, but fails to discuss, the Stalinist destruction of modernism in the 1930s and the creation of the high Stalinist style – sometimes called *Sovnovorok* (New Soviet Rococo) or *stil empir vo vremia chuny* (the empire style from the time of the plague – a play on words of Pushkin). Again, the drama is lost of such events as the tearing down of Thon's cathedral in the heart of Moscow to make room for a proposed new monument of the Soviet era, the Palace of Congresses. The great hole that was left there during some of the most traumatic years of the early Stalin era inspired a hoard of legends about a haunted city and one of the great neglected literary masterpieces of the period, Andrei Platonov's *Kotlovan*. (The hole was

eventually filled with an enormous outdoor swimming pool.)

The author touches on some broader issues in his epilogue: the unsuccessful modern search for an architectural style representing a unifying ideal, the Russian penchant for symbolically representing vanished functions, and the present passion for practicality divorced from any clearly defined post-Stalinist aesthetic that might help realize it. The author predicts not very startlingly that "the next great idea" – if there is to be one – will involve "some form of exchange with the architecture of the West", which the Russians will then develop "in an unpredictable manner".

Brumfield has captured much of the beauty and many important details of the stylistic development of Russian architecture in this book. The title *Gold in Azure* is well chosen; for this is a work that more fully than any other available in English captures the external beauty and the pastel colours of a Russian architecture that is both familiar and exotic. Still to be hoped for is a work that takes us beneath that colourful surface to probe the social and symbolic roles of these great structures that the Russians have for a millennium been throwing up implausibly but heroically in the cold and forbidding forests of northern Eurasia.

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Creoles as capitalists

J. S. Bromley

PEGGY K. LISS
Atlantic Empire: The Network of Trade and Revolution, 1713-1826
348pp. Johns Hopkins University Press.
£25.50.
08018 27426

If ever the past can instruct the present, the history of Latin America must come high on the list. Current broils, there perhaps more than anywhere, invite our statesmen to brood on "plus ça change". Yet synoptic histories of its slow-maturing, cruel, zigzag march to independence remain rare, the play between interests, passions and ideas still imperfectly understood. It is to this that Peggy Liss devotes the best part of a dense and challenging, if at times exhausting, assimilation of a large literature in several languages: "less a narrative than a plum pudding", she disarmingly calls it. There are two opening chapters on England and her mainland colonies, a third on Spain and Portugal, some intermittent gestures towards Brazil; but Spanish America is her stamping-ground, especially in its relations with a changing metropolis and the youthful USA. She is not concerned with the Palmer-Godechot thesis of a single democratic revolution in America and Europe. Indeed the French and their revolution make only fleeting appearances, a damaging rent in the "network", one may say, if only because France was throughout the age of spades or queen of clubs to England's diamond king, and a formidable Atlantic competitor. Without her rivalry, even the first American revolution makes only approximate sense.

Dr Liss has handicapped herself by spawning footnotes in aggregate as long as her text, not so much to provide supplementary information as to sort out her authorities, far beyond the requirements of academic style. Give her a point and she will follow, as if she were at heart a bibliographer. Thanks to the device of indexing all first references, her notes do indeed supply a valuable guide to hundreds of books and articles, even reviews. At the same time she is so anxious to represent all facets of her vast reading, to marry what less ambitious historians put asunder, that she constructs a panorama with arguments, "the broadest manageable picture", rather than an argument hung with illustrations. The intention is generous, the method monotonous, too often compacting events and tendencies into convenience capsules like "more entrée for export", "broad spectrum xenophobia" or "porcelain experienced general mercantile upsurge". Only in a final chapter, "Some Observations", does she come clean with her "relatively unusual vantage point": in a word, "we have seen that economic concepts and conditions were integral to political and social attitudes and occurrences, and the other way around, including in the causes of the Revolution of 1776".

Although evidently not an economic historian in the technical sense - she offers no tables and "trade" is little more than ships moving into "smugglers' creeks or temporarily open harbours - Liss succeeds remarkably well in capturing eighteenth-century delight in the power of free, or at least freer, trade to transform the world, conferring moral value on self-interest and raising the status of businessmen. No doubt the great reforming Spanish ministers listened to the Physiocrats, whom she neglects, as well as to the Scottish philosophers, after all less in tune with enlightened absolutism: John Lynch calls *comercio libre* "one of the great misnomers of history". But Spanish Economic Societies studied welfare in all its aspects and proliferated in America, with official encouragement, even in the 1790s. There was a moment when Florida Blanca and thoughtful creoles like Manuel Belgrán could embrace a brilliant future in partnership, even if their "happy revolution" did not remove the head-and-members bias of Spanish liberals. Sensitive to short-term conjunctures, Liss seals the fate of Spain's second conquest of the New World around 1800, later than historians who write it off as foredoomed by its own inherent contradictions. At all events, the "Icarian effect" of disenchantment with Godoy's expedients rings true. Creoles, increasingly aware of their own undeveloped estate, and increasingly in regional terms, had absorbed the idea of progress. And "the great art of making money", as a bishop of Quito put it, could be "the spirit and political soul of cultured peoples".

The intoxicating tenets of political economy were confirmed at first hand by the United States, which "stood for material well-being and for innovation itself", as well as a snub to European arrogance gratifying to creole resentment of Peninsular spur-wearers. Both lessons may reach further than the familiar stress on the Federal Constitution or on trade as the carrier of republican teaching, zealous as *los hispanistas* could be in proselytizing. Liss documents all these aspects and is particularly attentive to the stop-go expansion of North American commerce with the Caribbean, notably at Havana, down to the Plate and beyond, heralded by the whalers. British penetration, which ran ahead after 1808, is comparatively scant. There is a similar disparity in the treatment of foreign policies. She is clearly writing as an American for Americans. It is only in passing, almost as an afterthought, that she remembers to tell us that it was the British who brought Latin America what it most needed: capital investment.

There were other reasons for ultimate disillusionment with the USA, most obviously annexation in the Mississippi borderlands. More interesting are the hints of a precocious alarm at the damage done to indigenous industries by cheap foreign imports. The "rage to export" suited some interests but not all. Liss does not much help us here. The only industry mentioned is "interior textiles", effectively protected for a time, however, by the cost of overland transport - a fact of life never discussed, though it is suggested that the rising flood of imports weakened inter-regional exchange. From one so impressed by maritime commerce it is even odder to draw no light on the growth of indigenous shipbuilding and shipowning. Rapid market saturation had some as an unpleasant discovery, to those who tried to force contraband in earlier times, but the only light on this book belongs to 1785 or thereabouts.

Dr Liss could not hope to explore adequately all the tension-points in these fascinating societies. She concentrates on the elusive but decisive reality of people self-awareness, what fed it and how it reacted to new ideas, contacts, pressures: "a new and disestablished establishment". Mass unrest, while its presence is felt, tends to be slighted. It is never clear when references to "new men" mean immigrants, of whom there was also a flood; repeated invocations of population growth never include figures, striking enough for whites and blacks, absolutely sensational for mestizos and mulattoes - only the Indians declined. But social relations are to be "reshaped", we are told, in another book the next of this age. It will be something to look forward to, especially if the author recognizes that honest truth is not quite the same thing as the most pleasant representation.

The privateer sector

Janet Morgan

JOHN URE
The Quest for Captain Morgan
231pp. Constable. £8.95.
009 4652600

"We're more than a beach; we're a country", the Jamaican Tourist Board recently reminded the world - a country, like neighbouring islands in the Caribbean Sea, raided, plundered, quarrelled over, alternately neglected and lusted after since Columbus discovered the West Indies in 1492. The islands have been a prize not just because of their beauty and mystery - lush, tropical fragments of Eden in a warm blue-green sea - nor for the resources they possess, which have been mostly agricultural - rare woods and fine strong rushes, coconut and mango, citrus and papaya, coffee and spices, efficacious roots and herbs, sugar and, lately, marijuana. No, they were (and still are) sought after for two simple, unsurprising and closely connected reasons: for their strategic importance and because they are from time to time occupied, or claimed by, someone else. The rulers of one empire after another have argued over these territories and in these waters, either directly or through their representatives. Spanish, British, French and Dutch vessels lie at the bottom of these seas; American and Soviet weapons find their way there. Just as the Americans are now distressed to find that a group of construction workers in Grenada happened to be a gang of Cuban soldiers, so in the seventeenth century the British authorities in Jamaica were harassed by a Spanish resistance force, reinforced and supplied from Cuba, lurking in the mountains. Then, as now, ideology and strategic advantage were mixed up together; indeed, the British acquired Jamaica almost by mistake, when Cromwell sent a fleet and an army to undermine the Spanish Empire and bring freedom of worship to Hispaniola (now divided into Haiti and Dominica).

It was not only, then as now, thought to be unfortunate if the inhabitants of these islands were forced to worship alien gods and subscribe to alien doctrines; it was also, then as now, seen to be dangerous, so delicately situated as the islands were, close to South America and on key routes taken by ships passing between the New World and the Old. Military and commercial strategy were, as they remain, interdependent. These days the United States, conscious of the Caribbean islands' proximity to its own shores, seeks to buttress their frail economies; in 1663 King Charles II's representative instructed the Governor of Jamaica to "procure a trade by force" with his reluctant Spanish-owned neighbours. This mixture of motives has come in handy over the centuries; anyone who has ever meddled in the Caribbean has generally had several equally plausible explanations for having done so and one reason may always be used to screen another. Just as, for instance, the purpose of Grenada's new runways (to accommodate jumbo jets full of tourists, or military planes?) was shrouded with these serviceable ambiguities, so was the motive for, say, Commodore Mings' raids on Santiago in 1662 (rich prizes or to teach Spain a lesson?) And, as always, it is all the easier to begot the issue which was probably never clear to start with) when those directing a mission to the islands or in the surrounding seas turn to others for assistance - to puppeteers, mercenaries, privateers, with objectives of their own and, like Captain Morgan, a knack of slipping from the harbour before instructions can be clarified, or even rescinded.

To read John Ure's delightful, easy book is to remember that very little has changed in the Caribbean. Take Henry Morgan himself, a quietest-year-old Welsh soldier, of vague origins but said to be related to distinguished soldiers of fortune, who came to Jamaica in 1665 and tasted and liked plantation life. He took part in various privateering voyages and was so successful that by 1662 he was able to acquire his own ship, one of those recruited as part of the "motley bunch of irregulars" in Ure's words, induced by Commodore Mings to join the two ships he commanded in the King's name and swell the little fleet that was to sail on Santiago. For ten years Morgan cruised about the

Caribbean. The Santiago expedition was followed by two raids on the Mexican coast, one again directed by Mings and the other with a group of four fellow-captains. Morgan himself, as "the Admiral of the brethren of the coast", then led a daring venture into the Cuban interior, a lucrative raid on Portobello, on the Caribbean coast of Panama, and a bold foray into the lagoon of Maracaibo, off the Gulf of Venezuela. His career as a licensed privateer ended with the most spectacular, profitable and controversial venture of all, the sacking of Panama City in 1671, nearly a year, as he discovered when he returned triumphant to Port Royal, after Britain and Spain had reached agreement to cease hostilities in the New World. It was Morgan's failure to notice this treaty (he argued that news of it had misled him) which caused his arrest and shipment to London.

The rapport which Morgan achieved with Christopher Monck, Duke of Albemarle, its plausibility of his defence and the good sense of Charles II, himself shrewd and high-spirited who presided over the final hearing of the case, led to Morgan's acquittal on all charges - not to his appointment as Jamaica's Lieutenant Governor. Returning to Jamaica (and giving the Governor's ship the slip so that he should arrive second) Morgan set about putting the island's defences in order, enjoying himself with especial keenness when, in the interval between one Governor's appointment and another's, he had sole charge. But enemies in London conspired against him, his judgement in a smuggling case was overruled, he was said to have sworn (very mildly, if true) against the Assembly and to have uttered "extraneous expressions" in his wine. Libellous histories were circulated in London, alleging that he had been not a privateer but a pirate, that he had "pistolled nuns", blown up prisoners and swindled shipments out of the carefully allocated booty of the raids. (The baccarens would have councils to decide the precise date of embarkation, the target of their attack and the financial conditions of the venture: percentage of the prize money and compensation - "for the loss of a right arm, six hundred pieces of eight" - and so on - rates, Ure observes, which "compared very favourably with those offered in the Royal Navy a century and a half later".)

At the end of Morgan's life, things looked up. He won his libel actions and his old friend Albemarle was sent out as Governor. Morgan, reinstated in the Council and his prestige restored, lived out his days (not for long, as he was worn out at fifty-three) entertaining his shipmates and swashbuckling companions. What striking is how similar is his story to that of so many other - though perhaps not quite as glamorous - exotic misfits who fetch up in the West Indies, like the life and find a corner to exploit, and end by loving the Caribbean and being locally adored. Brave, reckless, crafty Morgan is in that way not unusual at all.

Nor, for that matter, is Ure. The diplomat (he was Her Majesty's Ambassador to Cuba when this book was written) who are pored to the Caribbean are often eccentrics of one sort or another and Britain's representatives tend to be particularly keen explorers. (Ure need not have recruited the wizened Maroon, Obediah, to pilot him and his wife through the notoriously difficult Cockpit, Company, Jamaica's hinterland; he then British High Commissioner was said by awed Jamaicans to know it just as well.) Perhaps Ure did seem a little odd to the Cuban Minister of Fisheries, the man from the Central Bank, the American from the Drug Enforcement Agency, the General commanding the US Southern Army and some of the others whose help he recruited in his re-enactment of Henry Morgan's journeys, but his modest, entertaining story makes his exploits seem a perfectly natural way for an Ambassador to spend his days and, indeed, a useful way to find out about these countries and their people. Producing this agreeable book required Morgan and his equally intrepid wife to make long, gruelling journeys: who knows how they may one day come in useful, or whether, if more intelligence might even be improved.

Progress by inches

P. J. Parish

BOOKER T. HARLAN
Booker T. Washington: The Wizard of Tuskegee 1901-1915
540pp. Oxford University Press. £29.50.
019 2032020

At the dawn of the twentieth century, Booker T. Washington, son of a slave mother and an unidentified white father, was the best-known black man in the United States. From his base at Tuskegee Institute in Alabama, Washington had built up a network of influence, intrigue, patronage and personal contact which would have been the envy of any political boss. He had been catapulted into national prominence by his speech at Atlanta in 1895, in which he offered black acceptance, for a time at least, of disenfranchisement and some forms of segregation in return for a share in economic growth and national prosperity. Six years later, his dinner at the White House with Theodore Roosevelt seemed to give the clear seal of approval and success, not only to the man himself but the way ahead which he had indicated. In fact, by 1901, Washington's career had reached its peak. Louis R. Harlan's earlier volume of biography stopped on the climactic one of the White House dinner, which con-

fronts him with a problem in dealing with the last fifteen years of Washington's life, although it would be unfair to describe these as one long anti-climax. Rather, Washington lived precariously on a plateau of influence and authority at least until 1906; thereafter, in the wake of the Atlanta race riot, and the Brownsville incident which exposed his inability to influence his friend in the White House when it really mattered, Washington's power and prestige went into a steady decline. There were of course deeper reasons for the erosion of both his authority and his reputation, as Professor Harlan makes clear: the tightening net of discrimination and segregation which his methods had failed to check, the presence in the White House of one president, William Howard Taft, who made no pretence of sympathy for black aspirations, and then of another, Woodrow Wilson, who endorsed segregation in government offices and approved the blatantly racist message of D. W. Griffith's *Birth of a Nation*. (Among other things, Harlan's book is a vivid reminder of the pervasive racial prejudice of America in the progressive era.) Washington had pleaded that "an inch of progress is worth more than a yard of complaint", but progress, even by the inch, was more and more difficult to discern. Lack of progress led to rising protest and the emergence of a new kind of move-

ment, based in the North, inspired by men like W. E. B. DuBois, mobilized in the NAACP, and determined to make a stand in favour of social and racial justice. As Harlan remarks: "whereas the NAACP from a Northern base sought to challenge racial injustice, Washington from a Southern base sought to ameliorate it."

Washington was not only a highly visible public figure, but also an immensely private and often secretive man, in some ways remote even from those who knew him best. His voluminous papers (edited by Harlan, and published as *The Booker T. Washington Papers*) contain very little on his personal and family life, and this gap, together with the instincts of a scholar who has little time for excursions into "psycho-history", has fashioned a biography based firmly on the principle, "by their deeds shall you know them"; and it is none the worse for that. Harlan builds up his picture of Washington by the accumulation of details, which is the sensible way to approach a man whose career did not normally proceed by dramatic gestures or participation in sensational events, who was deeply suspicious of abstractions and had no coherent ideology, but who preferred to work through intrigue, lobbying, and manipulation. Washington was much more a fixer than a thinker.

Harlan never entirely loses sympathy with his subject, but his strictures are often severe, and usually with justification. He suggests that the elaborate maze of Washington's activities served as a screen to conceal the lack of a solid centre of coherent ideas and sustained purpose. Inevitably, he laments that Washington conceded so much for so little in return: repeatedly he insists that compromise, concession and accommodation had become so much a habit with Washington that he lost (if he had ever possessed) the stomach for a fight, the sense of outrage, and the appetite for challenge and confrontation, which the gross racial injustices of the times increasingly demanded.

If Washington's methods and his career ended in failure, it was more than a personal failure. The Atlanta Compromise had rested on the notion of a triple alliance between

blacks, Northern businessmen and the white leaders of the new South. Washington was hopelessly let down by his putative partners in that alliance. In the South, he was defeated not just by foul-mouthed racists like the Mississippi newspaper editor who dismissed him as "this saddle-coloured accident of an evening's interperence", but by the less coarse but equally deep-rooted prejudice exemplified by the auditor sent by the governor of Alabama to examine the finances of Tuskegee Institute who confessed his astonishment that a black man should be able to keep books. In the North, Washington had influential friends and many admirers. Andrew Carnegie, who contributed large sums to Tuskegee, called him "one of the foremost of living men... the modern Moses", and bracketed him with the other Washington as the father of his people. But his Northern supporters also turned him into the archetypal "good nigger" who knew his place and who would not make trouble, or, worse still, they treated him as a special case and, in doing so, helped to undermine his credibility in the black community. Edgar Gardner Murphy explained that, if he invited Washington to dinner, he would have to entertain his wife also, then to accept return invitations, and then to meet his family and friends. "Where do you draw the line?" he asked. "Can you draw it unless you keep all Negroes behind it?"

Through all the compromises, deviousness, personal rebuffs and humiliations, Washington retained his personal and racial pride, along with his faith that the black American could eventually, by his own efforts, win the place in society which should have been his by right. But optimism often clouded his judgment, and his aims and methods became outdated. The spider's web which he had so elaborately spun around himself enabled him to live and work, for many years, with all the conflicts and contradictions which ran through his career, but, in the end, they wore him out.

Louis Harlan has not attempted a superficial rehabilitation of Booker T. Washington. Rather, through his erudition, scholarship, and judgment, he has done justice to a remarkable man and many-sided man.

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ARIEL DORFMAN

Widows

Translated by Stephen Kessler

146pp. Pluto Press. £7.95 (paperback, £2.25). 086 104 7250

In modern Spanish, the verb *desaparecer*, "to disappear", has become transitive. People do not just disappear in South America: unidentified men in unmarked cars "disappear" them. Such abductions of citizens by (para-)military forces is not confined to the Southern Cone of the continent, although after the military takeovers of the last decade (Chile, 1973; Argentina, 1976) it was there that the phenomenon gained prominence. Amnesty International reports at least 4,650 documented cases still outstanding. *Widows* is a novel about those missing persons: *los desaparecidos*.

Ariel Dorfman, a Chilean, wrote this book in exile. During the Allende period he was a Professor of Journalism, fascinated by the ideologies of comics (he co-authored *How to Read Donald Duck* and deconstructed the Lone Ranger and Babar the Elephant in *The Empire's Old Clothes*). The diaspora of intellectuals that took him to Argentina, Europe

and the USA has added a wide range of cultural reference.

Widows is his first novel to be translated into English. His original intent was to publish the book under a pseudonym in Scandinavia, and have it "re-translated" into Spanish to circulate in his homeland. The book purports to be written by a Dane in 1941-1942, and is set in occupied Greece. But he avoids the realist clutter of local detail, and has contrived a tragedy of universal application.

A corpse is washed up on the stony beach of a river in a country under military rule. Another disappeared peasant has come back. Old Sofia Angelos pesters the Captain again. She had claimed the first cadaver as her father and the second as her husband. The military are embarrassed by the revenant body. A quick burial is essential "to prevent contamination and other dangers". There is "subversion" in the mountains, and the place where the body appeared could become a focus of "conspiracy".

Eleven women, five goats and two dogs make a piecemeal camp. "A little tablecloth on some big rocks . . . fruit cooling in the river . . . a fire for soup." The thirty-six other women tactically claim the body. The captain at last takes the last male of the Angelos household hostage, to frighten Grandma Sofia into

giving up, but she does not retract her demands: "Give us back the bodies of our men" and "We want the killers punished".

The final chapter is a confrontation by the river at dawn. Soldiers face "the crazy old women and their daughters". Then, "a flock of birds crossed the sky . . . All are 'strangely united' in watching them. (The reader remembers, earlier in the book, a rich man's advice to a boy who guarded his orchards, "You've got to shoot the birds that eat the fruit. That way they don't come back.") The soldiers move forward. But night and the river have conjured another body. Acting as one, the women pick up the dead man in their arms.

The central tensions of the book spring from a formalized opposition of the sexes. "War is men's business," says the Captain. "A woman's place is in the house. Or in bed." Also, "For the nation's army, there is nothing more sacred than woman and nothing greater than motherhood. It is in defence of that woman and of the values of the home . . . that we have always acted." Even in resistance, the women are passive, "simply waiting . . . for them, the soldiers, to decide what they were going to do, how they were going to do it, when." But when a patriarchal society has its men taken away, the women are finally impelled to find a tenta-

tive strength in each other. This kind of feminist awareness has fertilized other Chilean writing in exile, for example José Donoso's *El jardín de al lado*.

The characters are not vividly particularized. They are human archetypes, and "Greek" women function as a chorus to the actions of the men. The narrative technique is more complex, with shuffled time-sequences and modernist devices like stream of consciousness sentences without capitals; in Chapter 6 we are faced by a "missing" section x. The Captain's thoughts and deeds are narrated omnisciently, not without sympathy, but always in the third person, whereas the hostage boy veers between "I", "you" and "he", and his twin sister speaks as "I", "she", and frequently as "we". Stephen Kessler's translation is American ("gotten", "garbage", "plenty macho"). At times it sounds clumsy, though this may reflect a rough urgency in the original prose.

By taking on this subject Dorfman runs all the risks of the political novel: rhetoric, didacticism, rant. But the literary man has the edge on the political animal. *Widows* is a carefully understated work that achieves its best effects by distancing itself from the author's historical situation and by exercising a powerful restraint.

Sounds and symbols

Frances Partridge

MARIA LUISA BOMBAL

New Islands

112pp. New York: Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, (distributed by Faber and Faber). £8.50. 0374 2211189

A recommendation from Jorge Luis Borges is an excellent introduction to any book. In his *Selected Writings* (New York: Random House, 1964) he writes of Maria Luisa Bombal (1910-80) that she is never missing from lists of memorable writers of Latin America. She also received encouragement from Pablo Neruda, and the longest story in this book - it is also the earliest - was written in the kitchen of the flat she shared with him and his wife in Buenos Aires. Yet her output was remarkably small: two novellas, only one of which has previously been translated into English; and a number of short stories. Versions of her work have appeared in France, Switzerland, Czechoslovakia and Japan, and she was awarded two literary prizes in her native Chile.

By birth half Argentine and half German, Bombal was educated in Paris (where she studied drama and took her degree at the Sorbonne in literature and philosophy), while her thirty years of married life were spent in the United States. Perhaps this cosmopolitan career may partly account for a certain indeterminacy in her writing. The jacket blurb claims for her "the baroque sensibility that characterizes

Latin American novels", and goes on to describe the five stories in this book as "little gems". Neither description is accurate. Bombal's style in no way resembles the richly ornate elaboration of such writers as Carlos Fuentes, Alejo Carpentier or García Márquez. It is poetical, imprecise, and yet gives an impression of having been carefully polished. A less visual writer than any of the three just mentioned, she relies on the sound of her sentences and a somewhat surrealist symbolism. As for "little gems", these stories do not suggest sharply cut diamonds so much as drifting water-plants, mists and strange silences. Bombal's images and vocabulary are limited; she tends to repeat such words as "fragile", "mysterious" or "indefinable". I agree with a Chilean critic's appraisal of her work as "floating, tragically immersed in a permanent atmosphere of melancholy". It certainly contains no humour or irony.

Of the tales in this collection the first and last are based on the same theme - a man's longing for his dead wife as seen through the eyes of a second woman. "Final Mist" begins with the arrival home of a pair of loveless newly-weds. The heroine's passionate night of love with another man is almost the only event in twenty years or so, but whether it is to be understood as fantasy or reality is unclear. The new islands of the title story, the last in the book, have been thrown up, still smoking, on the surface of a lake by some underwater eruption. The description of a party of hunters venturing on to their hot slimy soil, and "cushioning under their boots frenzied silver fish stranded by the tide" is vivid and imaginative. Afterwards the uncanny, or even the supernatural, intrude. The other three stories are very short, and should probably be read as prose-poems. Most of the stories are set in large, shadowy houses, with log fires and "old pianos" on which some of the heroines are fond of playing, when they are not looking at themselves in the mirror or loosening their long hair. Brigada "doesn't know exactly who Mozart is", though he "takes her nervously by the hand and conducts her to a blue-marble staircase"; while "the rain, secret and steady" still whispers in Chopin, like handfuls of pearls raining on a silver roof. Maria Bombal's attitude to her male characters is tinged with hostility, but she describes their physical attractions lovingly, particularly in terms of smell and with comparisons from natural history: "the odour from his chest is a mixture of hazel-wood and the great of a strong clean man"; "the fruit and vegetal odour of his flesh".

Maria Bombal is an original writer but the tone of *New Islands* is somewhat flat and introverted. It is faithfully conveyed by the translation, which was an award from Columbia University.

Life into art

Terence de Vere White

JONATHAN KEATES

Allegro Postillions

128pp. Edinburgh: Salamander Press. £7.95. 0907540368

Jonathan Keates - the very name is like a bell - makes a distinguished entry into fiction with these four stories "based on incidents in the lives of well-known figures". The bell is a resoundingly English one, but there is nothing here of England except the protagonist in the first and the most memorable of these stories. Indeed, "Morn Advancing" has made a greater impression on me than any fiction that has come my way since *The Mosquito Coast*. Keates shows the same skill in involving his readers in all the circumstances of the scene.

George Cattermole (1800-68), according to Redgrave, was "more dramatic and pictorial than really artistic . . . He chose picturesque and romantic subjects such as brigands, armed robbers, knights-errant and fair ladies" - a perfect recorder for the dramatic incident narrated here. I shall not pretend I was aware that he visited North Calabria or made a picture there. All the stories in the book are placed in Italy during the first half of the nineteenth century, and Keates has evolved a measured manner, as if Hemingway had never existed, lightened by a happy gift of phrase.

Cattermole is preoccupied with his business; when people obtrude themselves he gets cross, as when the chambermaid at the inn thrusts a rebel proclamation into his hand or when the captain of the soldiers at the town gate insists on seeing his passport when he wants to leave the town before dawn. "Pale fingers of light in the sky make him feel 'restless', and his sleep is disturbed by that maid making love with one of the soldiers who are on the track of her rebels, to such good purpose that 'Everything in his own room that could do so began gently to vibrate'. He listens with 'amused fascination to the pangs of love'. Behind another wall an elderly party is smothering heavily, and a dog chained up in the yard howls all night.

Outside the town the painter discovers an ideal spot for his purpose, commanding a view of ravine, fields and farmhouse. He sets to work before the 'marvellous blurring' of the dawn dissolves and reveals 'a lot of garish commonplace'. While he is addressing himself to a patch of broom-brushes he notices a movement 'as if someone were shaking out a wrinkle in an enormous blanket'. The valley is full of soldiers. They cannot see him, but he watches the action that follows, beginning with the opening of a window in the house and a woman screaming, ending when bullets scatter the thatched roof on fire and four men and two women lie out of the house. Three are taken

away by the soldiers; three men, after a hurgane from the impudent captain at the town gate, are "lashed each to a tree facing the sun" and shot.

The action takes place in such a short space of time that the painter rubs his eyes when the soldiers leave and wonders whether it has been a dream. When the house catches fire he takes a piece of rag and rubs it out of his picture, but now the three bodies, "warm for the crowd", and "the vulgarity of the action" have wrecked his painting. He crumples it up and, longing to revenge himself on that captain, flies away without as much as a glance at the victims. They are not his business.

The inhuman detachment of the artist is possibly what Keates sees as the connection between this story and the three that follow it. Two of them describe the unmaking of humbugs. Andrea Pellegrini in "The Disgraced Elephant" is the author of *Clara*, a historical novel which once drew a civil letter from Sir Walter Scott. He lives on sufferance in Villafranca until he provokes a riot with a libretto for which he is sent into exile. The successful attempt to engineer his return has embarrassing consequences.

"Enthusiastic Fires" tells of the unmaking of Hippolyte Jolliot, Bonaparte's favourite composer, living in Venice with an enormous household. His Iago, one Arcim, gives Keates an opportunity to exercise his enviable descriptive power: "His sneering, billowy manner annoyed me as much as his very loud laugh, which sounded like someone falling down stairs."

The last of these stories makes me fear that Keates may be in pursuit of a red herring (the jacket blurb mentions development of these themes in a novel). He may have Mussolini in mind, but there is a stale whiff of Molnar and Schnitzler in "A Slight Disorder". Engraves are asked to do more than their duty ("Cautious" and Alexander are like furnished houses, very well if you take them for the season.)

The using of real persons in fiction justifies itself when it comes off; what fictitious character was ever without distant relatives in real life? The incident itself must catch the imagination, as Max Beerbaum did in his essay "Crisis Imperfectum", where he imagines the reason why Tschibbe never finished that portrait of Goethe he began on the Italian Journey. Jonathan Keates might look at Beerbaum in his advantage. The Cattermole story is in another class. It alone justifies this book, and leaves an imprint on the memory like a Breughel landscape.

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Cock-a-hoop

Toby Fitton

MICHAEL O'GORMAN

Clancy's Bulba

214pp. Hutchinson. £7.95. 0191537703

Cock-fighting novels are not frequently encountered: curling or *boules* might yield more. This certainly gives rarity interest to the first novel by Michael O'Gorman, an Irishman "of novel and practical experience in the restaurant trade" in Sydney, now working and writing in London. His tale of the cock-fighting fancy in County Mayo in the late 1920s is conveyed largely in phonetic dialogue, much of it between three temperate Irishmen, peppered with monotonous obscenity and profanity which rings all the more true for lacking the inventiveness of much fictional Irish speech.

Such picturesque metaphor as there is comes out most notably in Pagannini O'Leary's graphic descriptions of his piles, "brimstones burnin' their ugly fires . . ." (a whole theology of posterior stigmata is developed), and Pagannini's protological prognostications about the life of his part-owned bird form one of the more dynamic sub-plots that all too easily detract from the development of the main theme.

As befits the title - Taurus Bulba being a country-bred fighting cock of rare prowess - it is the sawdust ring that dominates much of the book. Birds with scores like conker matches meet by courtesy of a venal Garda for short and woody battles. A miasma of tobacco smoke and a buzz of small and complicated bets attend their brief encounters.

Backward though they seem (although in

Mumbo-jumbo

Mary Kathleen Benet

WONDERLILLO

The Names

330pp. Brighton: Harvester. £8.95. 0370800663

The Names begins promisingly, like a sophisticated thriller turned serious novel with no loss of pace. James Axton, a "risk analyst" based in London, travels the Middle East evaluating the dangers to American corporate executives for insurance purposes. "Are they killing Americans?" is his question to any colleague back from Beirut, Nairobi, Kabul. He and his friends know their way around the airlines, the international hotels, the military hot-spots. "We told each other where you had to sign a document to get a drink, where you couldn't eat meat on Wednesdays and Thursdays, where you had to sidestep a man with a sword when you left your hotel."

James's wife Kathryn has left him and joined an archaeological dig on the island of Kouros; an anti-American Canadian, she can't stand his job. When he arrives on the island to visit her and their nine-year-old son Tap, an observant child who is writing a novel, things seem set for

Minor figures

Hilary Davies

CAROL JONES

Life in the Day

190pp. Duckworth. £7.95. 0195617435

Life in the Day, winner of the "Novel for Wales" competition organized to mark the centenary of University College, Cardiff, invites the reader to reflect upon the possible parallels and differences between the twentieth-century narrator, William Vaughan, fighting a rearguard action against mental illness from a wheelchair in an old people's home, and the brave Welsh thesis subject, Sir Wilfrid Vaughan, who, we learn, muffed a colonial election in New Guinea under the Stuarts. Apart from sharing a name, the Vaughnans have other characteristics in common: being

1927 their demotic chatter includes a "sadistic" along with the "smigeens" and "gombreens", and their trousers have zippers to their flies), the three peasants who share this paragon of birds enjoy a variety of rural experience that provides nearly half the book with the quintessentially Irish entr'actes of a wake and an exciting outsider victory in a Grand National. Romantic interest is not high, but an ugly spinner's taking some belated consolation in comforting a widowed father newly bereaved of a consumptive only son has a certain bucolic poignancy to set against some exceedingly rough taproom fighting and the other recreations of the fancy.

These long divagations in the middle of the book, while the prodigious cock is being nurtured for the grandest match of his life, have some narrative flair, but the story of the centenarian seannachie, Gildiey O'Dowd, turning up to stay the jollities of a country wake with tales of revolutionary derring-do may not be original enough for the weight it has to carry. This story contrasts oddly with rumbustious descriptions of pub and privy life.

Bardic narrations eventually give way to the tale of Taurus Bulba himself, brainwashed tinker-style into extremes of aggressiveness and on tip-top form to meet Satan the First in prolonged (and for the owners and side-betters highly profitable) mortal combat in the ring. The battle itself is described with a brisk efficiency that resists the temptation to dwell too much on the nasty business of muscles slit and eyes gouged. Michael O'Gorman's is a fair enough yarn, but some of his sub-plots show a little more discipline and constructive skill than his disagreeable - though undeniably novel - main theme.

a searching examination of the beleaguered imperialism of the multinationals. What is more, this thrillerish knowingsness is set in fine descriptions of Athens, the island, the Peloponnese - a Greece neither of natives nor tourists, but of insiders with the alertness given by a bad conscience. James doesn't feel guilty exactly, but wary; he is still in love with his wife and has not yet come up with an answer to her critique of what he is doing. There is plenty of tension in the air.

Inexplicably, Don DeLillo swerves right off the track of this story and takes us in quite another direction, into the wholly implausible tale of a murderous cult whose members, holed up in the mountains, choose sacrificial victims on the basis of their initials. Kathryn's field director Owen Brademas, a Kansan whose fascination with ancient languages is convincingly traced to his failure to "speak in tongues" in the Pentecostal churches of his boyhood, becomes obsessed with the cult, traces them eventually to India, then recounts the story to Axton.

This change of focus throws the whole book out of perspective. Is an analogy of some kind intended between the cult members (leftover hippies, with a touch of the Manson family) and the international businessmen? Why is the cult so secretive about its name, and what is the name's significance? Why do these shadowy

Welsh, an interest in a pulse-based diet, a healthy scepticism about the Old World (exemplified mainly by Wales) and a somewhat naïvely utopian vision of the New (Newfoundland). Where they differ is in the fact that the present-day Vaughan has never moved beyond academia on the Celtic fringe and suburban London, while Sir William at least attempted to build a "Newland" and to gain royal privileges in order to do so. He was a minor figure in his own time, but compared to him his namesake seems drabness itself.

Carol Jones tries hard to convince us that the apparent banality of Vaughan's existence, both now and in the past, is offset by a wary, inquiring mind; given his enforced earlier memories, his little else to do but savour earlier memories. Nevertheless, the reader's frustration is obvious: with the accumulation of detail obviously meant to be significant, or symbolic, but which remains obstinately trivial and in-

Ambitendencies

Linda Taylor

REBECCA HILL

Blue Rise

296pp. Michael Joseph. £8.95. 0718123727

Oh, dear, life is such a puzzle - all those tricky little pieces with complicated convolutions that just won't fit together. Even worse when some of them are missing. Jeanine Lewis (née Hinton), Rebecca Hill's narrator, is faced with this problem. American, raised in the south, married in the North, she has to get back to her roots - bible-bashing Mississippi State - to sort it all out: "I am here because my life doesn't work, and in taking the thing apart and putting it back together again, I don't seem to find enough pieces. I think it's possible I may have left some of them here. I think I have come here because this place may have a piece of my puzzle."

In theory, Jeanine knows what to do - she's a psychologist; in practice, it's not so easy, particularly as the puzzle pieces have a habit of changing shape - just when you think the picture is emerging, a section dislodges, distorts itself, demands attention. The key to it all is daddy - dead now and remembered fondly and heroically by Jeanine's mother, but in life a tyrant. In marrying Larry, Jeanine says, "I took pains not to marry my father." But Larry's kindness, his absence of brutality, can be read as indifference. Better the devil you know . . .

Jeanine has a lot of devils to expunge - the demons of ambivalence: bitterness towards her father tinged with adoration; conspiratorial

giggles with her mother masking a deep-seated aggravation; dependence on her husband warring with her feminism; admiration for her gritty, loose-living cousin, Drew, marred by disgust; besottedness for her daughter, Laura, apologizing for casual motherhood. By going home, Jeanine learns to give up her past: discovers herself, rediscovers what she and Larry are engaged in - "a struggle that is painful and critical . . . Not finished."

Blue Rise, Rebecca Hill's first novel, belongs to the self-analytical genre: the story of my life, of how I became what I am now. The built-in solemnity of the material is a problem for the author, though Hill's vivid narrative triumphs locally over the flat-footed psychological bits. On the details of Southern events - the Hinton family party, the evening out with Drew and Rochelle and Raymond, on recollections of childhood, on the awkwardly painful cut and thrust between mother and daughter, she can't be faulted. And there are nice extended metaphors - life as a game of chess, for instance:

For me the game turned into one more model of social organization . . . Castles with secret passages, hobbled knights, populous pawns. Bishops are merely overgrown pawns . . . The king: nervous. He paces, keeps himself reined in tight . . . the queen is a renegade . . . she is unbound by the rules, save one: the king must live.

On the issue that informs the book - should I or should I not stay with Larry? - however, Hill is less distinct. Her wryness and wit seep away; she allows Jeanine to take herself, and by association her immediate family, too seriously. But Larry is only a hazily ponderous voice on the telephone and Laura, when she arrives for Jeanine's last few days in the South, is a spoilt Yankee brat. If the point were an ironical one - that non-feminist Southern women (they know how to suffer, how to humour, how to manipulate) are better survivors than poor old Jeanine with all her Northern college education, her liberal views, her fine sensibility - there might not be such a credibility gap. As it is, we have to take off with Jeanine on the plane; we have to leave behind all that Mississippi soil and dirt and mess - she's finished with it all; we are forced to be privy to her sober conclusions.

Northern lobotomy cures Southern paranoia: the novel ends like a psychiatric case study, without humour, without edge, with dulling complacency. At the expense of complexity, the puzzle pieces fall sensibly into place.

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A HUTCHINSON PAPERBACK

COMMENTARY

The awfulness of exile

Peter Kemp

ALAN BENNETT
An Englishman Abroad
BBC1

With ironic panache, the opening sequence of *An Englishman Abroad* strikes the play's keynote. As the screen fills with a poster of Stalin's face, the spruce tones of Jack Buchanan, on a crackling soundtrack, croon "Who stole my heart away?" Holding together the doctrinaire and the debonair, counterpointing Moscow and Mayfair, this overture is perfectly attuned to what follows. Very much a tale of two cities, the film – impeccably directed by John Schlesinger – juxtaposes the London of extravagance, smartness, frivolity with the grubby guardedness of Moscow in the 1950s.

Central to it – played with immaculate disavowal by Alan Bates – is Guy Burgess, rapidly established as far more socialite than socialist. Surrounded by the drab and dour, he hankers for the jaunty stylishness of the London he's lost. As a way of investing himself with this by proxy, he inveigles Coral Browne – then appearing with the Old Vic in Moscow – to buy tailored clothes for him in England. Brief subsequent scenes, as she makes these purchases, afford glimpses of the world of *de luxe* idiosyncrasy Burgess is so wincingly wistful for.

The film's longest episode takes place in Burgess's flat, a pathetic oasis of would-be Englishness. Here, Coral Browne – fur-swathed amid the utility furniture, sardonically self-conscious, warily sympathetic – registers, through skilled, small movements of the eyes and lips, her growing realization of the homeliness behind Burgess's brazen facade. In his beat vein of bleak hilarity, Bennett has Burgess perform, with his balalaika playing, a song from *The Gondoliers*. The song, affecting use in the play's final moments. Dashing go-up in the Savile Row suiting Coral Browne has sent him, Burgess dapperly promenades through dowdy Moscow, while a background chorus from *HMS Pinafore* affirms that "He remains an Englishman".

Military matters

Michael Hofmann

HEINRICH VON KLEIST
Penthesilea

The Gate at the Latchmere, Battersea

When the Amazons arrived before Troy, it was supposedly as allies to the beleaguered Trojans, but soon, calamitously, they emerged as an independent third force, equally and indiscriminately opposed to both Greeks and Trojans. And so, what was already a sexual war for the possession of Helen became one in another, far more radical way. For Kleist, the story of Penthesilea offered a way of dramatizing love and war as reciprocal metaphors – the erotic appeal of war, the militarization and rivalry of love – culminating in the single combat, at once war-crime and *crime passionnel*, in which Achilles is gruesomely and needlessly killed by Penthesilea.

In this new production of *Penthesilea*, there is never any question but that the overriding reality is that of war, and so the play is offered, and taken, in something of the spirit of a deterrent. Kleist himself wrote that *Penthesilea* contained all the "pain and glory" of his soul – or, possibly, all his "dirt and glory" (there is some doubt whether the word is *Schmerz* or *Schmutz*). But, pain of dirt; it is the first item that is mostly in evidence here, and not glory. In mounting his grandiose Romantic drama on a diminutive stage, Michael Bärz, the director, has gone for a small-scale realism with television virtues: physical immediacy, harshness, abrasiveness. A range of truncated pyramids stand in for Kleist's Caucasian scenery; there is a catwalk, camouflage netting, scaffolding; the stage, which itself looks like sand and paper, is mostly dark or savagely cross-lit. The set evokes nothing so much as a full-scale battlefield when it is depicted by the apprehensive

Remaining an Englishman, for Alan Bennett, means retaining a relish for scenes such as the one Burgess is figuring in. A sense of irony, a taste for parody, a propensity for putting things inside mocking quotation marks, an ability to dip, with inventive playfulness, into a heritage – part treasure-house, part lumber-room – of fascinating period trivia, dated classics, middle-brow theatre, musicals operetta, anecdotes: all these, for Bennett, are quintessentially English pleasures. The most melancholy aspect of Burgess's situation is being barred from them. What he yearns for is gossip. Never complaining about being shadowed, he grumbles – "Not strong on irony, the comrades" – about the way those who clumsily trail him are unresponsive to bantering jokes.

Though mainly taking place in Moscow, *An Englishman Abroad* is firmly situated at the centre of the imaginative territory Bennett has very much made his own. It's not just that he has depicted an Anglophile traitor before – in *The Old Country*. But exile, the play's subject, is a theme deeply congenial to Bennett; nostalgia is an emotion whose appeal he is powerfully and mockingly susceptible to. Most of Bennett's males are displaced persons – often wry expatriates from Northern working-class life, for which they still harbour tangled feelings of affection, guilt and ridicule. Burgess's isolation is merely a more extreme instance of the social and sexual dislocation Bennett protagonists are regularly prone to. Emphasizing this, there is one way in which Bennett's Moscow seems a nightmare variant on his usual world. Ranged around it everywhere – in theatre corridors, at a stage door, in lavatories and hotels – are aproned haridians. Dumpy, unbragge-loaded lumps of female forcefulness, they come from a favourite Bennett mould. But, here, foreignness deprives them of a crucial feature – the factually wayward speech with which his British characters are furnished. Prumps who can never be hilarious, they embody Bennett's sense of the awfulness of exile – a place where the grotesque can only be grim. Contrasting with this, *An Englishman Abroad* itself – like all of Bennett's finest work – triumphantly turns life's absurdities, quirks and oddities into something at once fearful and funny.

wild-looking Greeks. Mick Bearwish's design is a curiosity: a kind of mongrel, achronistic military *chic*, leather, armour, great-coats, and the Amazons like Olivia Newton-John in hitched-up skirts and bandannas. This hardly does justice to the kind of glamour Kleist intended. These visual impressions are augmented by the translation, a hard-nosed modern version by Robert Nye, which alternates sensitive and faithful passages with deliberately flat slang. Thus, Kleist's ambivalent deployment of love and war appears now in the clever description of Penthesilea "armed up to the eyebrows", and now in coarse puns on "have" and "come".

The play as a whole leaves one with the impression of a hectic military spectacle. Its phases and turning-points are not as well-marked by the direction as they might have been: it is all rather one-paced. While Penthesilea (Susannah York) and Achilles (Paul Moriarty) act well together, both performers seem to be cold. Moriarty especially, a dour, crop-haired, greying man, is closer in type to a mercenary than a strapping and demigod. Their long scenes together, in which she explains to him the origin of the Amazons' beliefs and their female state and each tries to acquire the other under their own terms, are turned into a "my place or yours" debate: the Amazons' Feast of Roses and their cult at Thebes are do not find adequate places either on the tiny stage, or in Robert Nye's English. Of the other performances, Terence McGillicuddy's Odysseus, and Josephine Weldon's devoted Proteus are enjoyable. Although unconvincing for most of it, Mercie (Jacqueline Speers) responds excellently to her long speech, describing the last fatal encounter. For all the courage and conviction of Susannah York, Penthesilea looks even more as if it should be staged in a wide hall, with smoking elephants, hunting dogs and precipitous

Filial duties

Richard Brain

ATHOL FUGARD
"Master Harold" . . . and the boys
Cottesloe Theatre

The quotation marks around "Master Harold" which appear in the title of Athol Fugard's latest play (as given above) – they are there in the published text (60pp. Oxford University Press. £3.95. 0 19 281394 7) but not always in advertisements, notices or references – have their point. They are to indicate the titular form "Master" bestowed on the young but immature male of a superior class, and they also have imperialist echoes: "Yes, master . . . No, master (*bwana, baas*, etc)". The character in the cast list of the play (now in repertory at the Cottesloe until February 25, in the Market Theatre of Johannesburg's production) is not in fact called Harold, but Hally, and it is he who is the boy, a seventeen-year-old white South African, acted by Duart Sylwain with truly masterly control of adolescent energy, enthusiasm and fretfulness. The other two characters, Willy and Sam, though middle-aged black waiters employed by Hally's mother, are the "boys". The colonial usage, which is not peculiar to South Africa nor even to English-speaking countries, designates non-European servants – or indeed any males not of "white" race. It is the circumstances that occasion Hally to treat these men as "boys" for the first time, and Sam to call him "Master Harold", that provide the small, but unforgettable tragedy – no mere storm in a teacup – at the ending of the play. John Kani plays Sam with the styliness he showed as Styles in Fugard's *Sizwe Bansi is Dead* nearly ten years ago, but with enhanced dignity and power.

The appellation "Master Harold" symbolizes for all three the socially sanctioned world of class and status that puts an end to the happy and innocent associations of childhood and adolescence. With but little change the play could represent a realization of relationships at any time or place between employees and the child of an employer. But another older, stronger sanction than those of the employment nexus, and one more binding in every sense, underlies the writing by Fugard of this latest play: "Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee." It is the author's most explicitly autobiographical play. Hally is himself (Athol Harold Lannigan Fugard, born

in 1932 and thus aged seventeen when "Master Harold" is set); the St George's Park tearoom in P.E. was indeed run by his mother; his father had had one leg amputated, used crutches, and was in frequent pain and sometimes in hospital; and there were waiters named Willie Malopo and Sam Semela (the latter also taught ballroom dancing). Memories of those days in the mid-1940s ("I was about about thirteen"), and specifically of the moment when young Athol "out of a spasm of acute loneliness" spat in Sam's face, are set out on pages 25–27 of Athol Fugard's *Notebooks 1960–1977*, edited by Mary Benson (which will be reviewed in a later issue of the *TLS*). Fugard has made Hally a few years older, which helps to intensify the relationship between the priggish, home-hating, idealistic schoolboy and the kind, affectionate, patient, philosophical Sam, "the most significant – the only – friend of my boyhood years". The work is dedicated "for Sam and H. D. F." – the playwright's two fathers.

The play runs without an interval the realistic hundred minutes between Hally's return from school, not to home but to the tearoom where a teenage appetite for cake, conversation and cream soda can be sated, and the closing of the café; it is a wet and windy afternoon and not a single customer comes in. The place could as well be Port Sunlight as Port Elizabeth – race and colour apart. The banter, the practising of the quickstep by Willy – a slow fox-trot man if ever there was one, in the mould of Winston Tshona in *Sizwe Bansi and The Island*, but played now with eager gentleness by Ramolao Makhene – the discussion of cosmic meanings and figures of "magnitude" in world history, these pleasures, progress even in understanding between people – peoples almost – are blocked by telephone calls from Hally's mother to say his father is coming out of hospital. Hally's dishonour of his Dad by wishing him away – for good – and his frustration and fury at the return home ("Just when things are going along all right, without fail someone or something will come along and spoil everything . . ."). The principle of perpetual disappointment" are compounded by his literal and physical abuse of his alter father, Sam, when he speaks of filial loyalty.

Fugard, for all that he uses symbols and some sentimental scenes, in expunging the dishonour he felt he did so many years ago to his father and his friend Sam, has written an enduring parable of a play. Long may he live in the land he has been given a part in.

The periodicals, 8: Fiction Magazine

Neil Berry

JUDY COOKE (Editor)
Fiction Magazine: Autumn 1983
Volume 2, No 2
72pp. £1.25. Subscriptions £6.90 p.a. from
5 Jeffreys St, London NW1

The dearth of outlets for creative writing is an old and honourable complaint. In this country periodicals hospitable to serious fiction remain scarce. Until recently, after pointing to *Encounter* and the *London Magazine* with their monthly short stories, you had to think hard. The *Fiction Magazine*, now approaching its second birthday, was founded primarily as a vehicle for short stories and novels-in-progress. It began by regretting the hegemony of reviewing and promised to occupy the "open ground of fiction", fostering new writers and rediscovering old. Readers initially appeared to rally to the cause. The second issue brought news that the original print run of 3,000 needed to be increased to 18,000. Last year it came out quarterly. Recently however, despite Arts Council money and Booker Prize talk of a new age of fiction-reading, the magazine ran into trouble. The new number is only the second this year.

Perhaps the *Fiction Magazine* has been over-reliant on celebrities, never a guarantee of success; among its contributors have been Frederick Raphael, Antonia Fraser and Dirk Bogarde, not to mention such literary luminaries as Frank Muller and Russell Herr. To be

fair, the current issue contains a sufficiency of good writing. Malamud contributes a poignant short story and Bellow what could be a foretaste of a future novel. The number also includes a delicate London sketch by Maggie Gee, a deceptive whodunnit by Peter Lovejoy and a first person narrative by the Scottish writer Ron Butlin which impressively bisects horror and hilarity.

However, the three last-mentioned items (and also the contributions of George Mackay Brown and Michael Holroyd) have already been published and in its seventy-two pages the issue introduces only one new writer. Some of the material, moreover, feels palpably makeshift. Russell Hoban, who looks out glumly from the cover, surely reached into the bottom drawer for his two contributions. Then there is a "story" by Fay Weldon which can be read in less than sixty seconds. But the prize exhibit in this respect is the commemoration of Ross Macdonald by Matthew Coady: though scarcely more than a photograph plus caption, it occupies a whole page. Either Macdonald is worth writing about or he isn't.

To say that the *Fiction Magazine* was doing justice to its own prospectus would be over-generous. It might even be felt that it was selling short the customary raison d'être of the little magazine. Rather than incubating literary talent, it has sometimes behaved like a literary version of the *Reader's Digest*: there has been no real spirit of adventure. It would do the *Fiction Magazine* no harm to take a few more risks and to stop pretending that writers like Clive Sinclair is still a young candidate.

COMMENTARY
From the frontiers of painting

Richard Wollheim

The Genius of Venice 1500–1600
Royal Academy, until March 11

The title of the present exhibition at Burlington House is a magnificent understatement. *The Genius of Venice 1500–1600*, which revives the splendours of the great winter exhibitions of the post-war years, displays with great clarity the painting of Cinquecento Venice and its mainland: but it does something more. It displays painting itself. And that is because Venetian painting of the great period is painting. Around 1500, in what must have been the most beautiful site ever devised by man, painting – painting conceived of at once as an art and as a physical activity – came for the first time into its own. And whenever in later centuries painting returned to the level of genius, it drew, either directly or indirectly, upon the Venetian example: Velázquez, Poussin, Rembrandt, Watteau, Cézanne, Manet, Matisse.

The essence of Venetian painting lay in its materiality. It lay crucially in two elements: in, on the one hand, the practice of building up the picture from dark ground to light, so that it was now the thickness of the paint rather than its transparency that became the medium, and, on the other hand, the licence afforded to the brushstroke, under the impact of the hand and in response to the weave of the canvas, to divide and to leave behind a broken deposit of paint. In both respects Venetian painting departed from its Central Italian predecessors. And the primacy of Venetian painting, or what made it exemplary, is that, with every attempt it made to solve a pictorial problem, from the construction of single paintings to the formation of an expressive manner for the individual painter, in pursuit alike of composition and of style, it invariably returned to its material base and to the resources with which this supplied it. Instead of reliance upon drawing and perspective, the painter's means were now the visible mark, the use of shadow, the softening of contours, colour harmony rather than the balancing of contrasts, and the constant making and remaking of the picture as it came into being on the canvas.

One consequence of this physical mode of picture-making was that it facilitated the formation of individual style. Style grows out of a close alliance between the hand and the eye, mediated by the paint: it becomes a habit of the body. Undoubtedly anyone who goes to Burlington House will go primarily for the great masters – Titian, Lotto, Veronese – and he will not be disappointed. But he will soon be struck by the success with which minor masters developed artistic personalities that are no less clear, no less articulated, than those of the great. Much credit is due to the organizers of this exhibition for their selection, but it is a fact about Venetian painting itself that the visitor registers when, as he walks through the great rooms of the Academy, he finds himself listening to a number of smaller voices which are as distinctive as the songs of birds: Moroni, Palma Vecchio, Cariani, Savoldo, Jacopo Bassano, even the uneven Paris Bordone, have their own special calls. This is not art-history, though much art-history has gone into its preamble. It is lyrical. It is the basic experience which corresponds to that of the voice which directly addresses the ear and which is heard, not overheard.

The chronological limits of this exhibition do not allow us to see the Venetian revolution in painting; nor is it within the bounds of plausibility that the masterpieces of the aging Giovanni Bellini and the youthful mysterious Giorgione, the Metruselah and the Melchiorre of art, a partnership incomparable in the history of European painting, should have been transported to Piccadilly so as to fill the space between the two main bodies of the exhibition. The opening room provides the "history" with a number of works of explosive genius, including the highly eloquent "Judgment of Solomon" from King's Langley and the Glasgow "Girl and the Adulteress", and the regional contributions of authority. The last room, where Titian's bold and

makes his interlocutor ask, and it may on the face of it seem a paradox that if, as I claim, the Venetian mode is so apt for the formation of individual style, its beginnings should be immersed in the most turbulent controversy of attribution known to art-history. I do not think that the situation is so paradoxical, or that Valéry's joke is so subversive. The truth is that when style is not a matter of superficial mannerism or imitation but is something deeply entrenched in the painter, we do not in the present state of knowledge have an adequate conception of what that something is. In consequence, though we can recognize style in clear, central cases, marginal cases are bound to arise, and then we seem to have no idea of what we are looking for when we try to distinguish one style from another. Surface similarities and dissimilarities may be relevant, but equally they may not be, and the only direct method that has been well elaborated – the morphological method – is likely to be out of place when we deal, as in the Venetian case, with painting that is not based on draughtsmanship. The Giorgione / young Titian / aging Bellini / Sebastiano / Manicini problem remains, I am convinced, soluble and profound.

In point of fact I believe that the evidence that Burlington House currently provides is enough to sway the mind, even if not definitively, towards certain crucial conclusions. The juxtaposition of "The Judgment of Solomon" and the great architectural organ-shutters from San Bartolomeo a Rialto brings them all under the aegis of Sebastiano, and I find it increasingly hard to believe that the Glasgow painting, in which rounded figures startle up out of a frieze of broken paint, does not sort itself with indubitable Titians, even those here.

It is the artistic personality of Titian that looms over this whole exhibition. To regard Titian as the painter of sensuous pleasure is half the story. From the very beginning the central preoccupation with mortal energy in its varied manifestations: as youthful passion, or as the considered resignation of old age, or, most frequently, as transient impetuous curiosity, as the desire to seize or to rebuff the gaze of another – so that the fine patterning of occlusion and cropping, which is spread across late Bellinis, is replaced in the young Titian by a web of looks and glances. And from his earliest years Titian was able to illustrate this powerful sense of human incandescence by finding, at the frontier of paint and representation, innumerable correspondences: the arched line of the eyebrow, shadows and folds of drapery, the gathering-in of the evening landscape. For along with the cultivation of vitality there goes the awareness of fragility and the anticipation of death.

Titian is justly famous for his portraits. Along one whole wall of Burlington House there is – once, that is, one has subtracted the portrait of two children, which only enthusiasm could find acceptable – an extraordinary array of presences culminating in the fierce and sombre "Portrait of a Knight with a Clock" from Madrid. Nevertheless these pictures have often proved problematic even for their admirers; though it has not been easy to say why. Somehow they are not what they profess to be: Berenson, to whom it was second nature to praise one painter by denigrating another, extolled Lotto's portraits, the greatness of which is amply established in this exhibition, by comparing them, to their advantage, with Titian's portraits. Titian's portraits he calls "ceremonial portraits", and we may imagine, he writes, "Titian asking of a person he was going to paint 'Who are you? What is your position in society?'". But, if it is true that Titian's portraits have their beginnings in office and calling, it is only so as to finish up far beyond this point. Their oddity, I feel, is not that they fall short of particularity, but that they overshoot or transcend it – or such is their ambition. Where Titian's portraits join up with the main body of his work is by transporting their alters not only beyond their station in life, but also beyond their identity as persons, and so presenting them as different aspects of manifestations of protean man.

Of a piece with Titian's heroic attempt to bring into focus the vast variety of human



A chiaroscuro woodcut, made from several blocks in four shades of brownish-grey and black, depicting Archimedes. Thought to be by an artist of the Veneto-Ferrarese School and Ugo da Carpi, the print is currently on show at the Genius of Venice exhibition reviewed here.

states, bodily and mental, there were, throughout his life, moments of despair, in which he began to hanker after a more virile, a more peremptory, form of strength. His career was such that he constantly brushed up against an art of assertiveness, represented for him now by Pordenone, now by Giulio Romano, but throughout by the prevailing conception of Michelangelo, and Titian must be unique among painters of genius, firmly established in one manner of working, for the extent to which he experienced the lure, the intoxication, of another form. In the present exhibition this tendency can be seen in the statuesque "St John the Baptist". I doubt if it will be anyone's favourite painting, but it exhibits one facet of Titian's artistic psychology. The exhibition also contains three sublime examples of Titian's own final account of human nature.

In the years left to him after 1570, when, most probably, he was in his late eighties, Titian executed a handful of paintings in which he depicted sometimes under an allegorical interpretation, lust, rape, jealousy, the death of love, envy, torture, humiliation, and despair. There are no greater paintings than these. What redeems them is, it is not hard to feel, an all-encompassing form of acceptance, which does not stop short. What makes them great is the equanimity which they effect between tragedy, the vicissitudes of human flesh and paint. Burlington House shows two of these paintings, one of which deserves to be among the most-visited paintings in an English museum, and the other of which has never previously been exhibited: the Fitzwilliam Museum's "Tarquin and Lucretia", and "The Flaying of Marsyas" from Kroměříž, in Czechoslovakia. Of the same period there is a drawing, also from Cambridge, of a couple in embrace.

"The Flaying of Marsyas" transfixes the spectator who gives himself up to its harrowing drama. The end of the great period of Venetian painting returns us to its beginnings, and it is inviting to see Titian's painting as a tribute to the alterpieces of the aged Bellini. For it has been remarked that in these great Quattrocento masterpieces – supremely, in what is perhaps the greatest of them all, the Santa Corona altarpiece at Vicenza – the landscape is as if woven out of small patches of colour, it is

tapestry stretched taut. In "The Flaying of Marsyas" Titian's sky re-does Bellini's landscape to suffocating effect. But what is common to the two paintings is that in each case the (federated) background, paradisaical in one case, infernal in the other, reiterates the central figure, the baptized saviour, or the tormented satyr, so that the picture as a whole becomes itself a body, which is then suspended before our eyes in hope or in terror.

To a contemporary taste Lotto may very well be more appealing than Titian. His paintings are highly idiosyncratic, full of charm and spiritual intensity, and without the thick physicality that marks the style and content of Titian's art. Some of the paintings here are rarely seen, every one is of the highest quality, and they suffice to establish Lotto's genius.

It must be emphasized that this is not an exhibition exclusively of painting, nor would even the most casual visitor be well advised to treat it in this way. There is, for instance, a stunning selection of prints, including two outstanding groups by Jacopo de' Barbari and Giuseppe Sciarri, and some in which Titian evidently participated. The drawings, which cast chronologically a wider net than the paintings and display an intriguing variety of finish, and the sculpture, which includes the "Fugger Altarpiece" by Vittoria and some of his portrait busts, which recall Tintoretto, as well as Riccio bronzes, would alone make the visit to Piccadilly a powerful and sumptuous experience.

Titian's "Perseus and Andromeda", which has recently been restored, is currently the subject of a special display at the Wallace Collection, Hertford House, Manchester Square London W1. The restored painting is on show with a full-sized radiograph, infra-red photographs, contemporary engravings and explanatory texts until March 11. "Perseus and Andromeda" is one of a group of mythologies from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* painted by Titian for Philip II of Spain and intended to portray the female nude in a variety of poses. The restoration, which was begun in 1980, has revealed radical changes made by Titian in the composition of the picture. Analysis of paint samples has also revealed evidence of Titian's method of working up flesh tones by a complex series of scumbles and glazes.

Handwritten note: 1983 11 15 1983

The price of liberalism

Douglas Johnson

RAYMOND ARON
Mémoires: Cinquante ans de réflexion
politique
778pp. Paris: Julliard. 120fr.
226000332 X
The Committed Observer: Conversations with
Jean-Louis Missika and Dominique Walton
Translated by James and Marie McIntosh
292pp. Chicago: Regnery. \$17.
089526 624 5

On October 17, Raymond Aron appeared as a witness at the Palais de Justice in Paris, on behalf of his old friend from the 1930s, Bertrand de Jouvenel, who was suing the Israeli historian, Zeev Sternhell, for the accusations of antisemitism which the latter had made against him. When Aron had concluded his deposition he went to the cloakroom to fetch his coat. "Je crois que j'ai dit l'essentiel", he is reported to have said. He then suffered a severe heart-attack and must have died almost immediately.

This was an appropriate death. Aron was never afraid of appearing in public and of stating what he considered to be the truth. All his life he was haunted by the phenomenon of antisemitism, but he refused to fall into the easy trap of finding antisemites everywhere. He was loyal to his friends, but to defend someone with whom he was not in agreement, if it seemed right to do so, was the essence of his rationalism and liberalism. To speak lucidly, persuasively and concisely was the essence of his style.

Over the past few years Aron had been able to observe a surprising change in his reputation. Before the 1980s he had never been an intellectual *à la mode*. It was not his photograph that one saw displayed in the Left-Bank bookshops; it was not his books or articles that made the grade with the self-conscious intellectuals of Paris or with the cautious odd-job men whom the French government dispatched to the Soviet Union. Aron was the intellectual of the Left, the man who was not a Communist, but who was not a Conservative either. He was the man who was not a Communist, but who was not a Conservative either. He was the man who was not a Communist, but who was not a Conservative either.

But when Aron began to write his memoirs and to give interviews about his long and active career, things began to change. A series of highly successful television appearances were published in book form as *Le Spectateur engagé* (now translated into English as *The Committed Observer*) and became a best-seller, while the *Mémoires*, which appeared a month before his death, were hailed as the outstanding publication of this year's literary *rentrée*. Those who had most recently been the object of his criticisms, such as President Mitterrand and the present government, paid tribute to him on his death as one of the finest minds of his time, and those who had continuously been the object of his attacks, the Communists, hailed him as "un adversaire loyal". It was as if Aron's was to be placed in the same category as other notable recent deaths – those of Barthes and Sartre – and that he had at last been admitted to the ranks of the great.

Yet in his *Mémoires* Aron does not seek an easy success. He maintains much of the discretion and aloofness for which he was so frequently criticized. There are no revelations about the many famous men that he knew, there are few anecdotes, no gossip, no literary flourishes. Aron reviews his life in the same way that he wrote a thousand editorials, by analysis, and by establishing constant parallels between past and present. It is an exercise that he found difficult, because it meant searching into a past that was strange to him, "parlé en quelque d'un passé qui, pour être le mien, n'est pas moins étranger, objectif, que celui d'un autre". It is an exercise that he also found dangerous, because of the temptation to reconstruct a past, to endow it with a logic that it did not possess. "Je crains de styliser".

This style of autobiographical writing is exactly what one might have expected from Aron. The cool appraisal, the seemingly detached account of events, the marshalling of evidence with exact and careful references,

why should an author change his method simply because he is writing about himself? But what is unexpected is the atmosphere of unease which permeates this book. This is first shown in references to Aron's family. His father, by coming only second in the most respectable of all competitive examinations, the *agrégation de droit*, was unable to follow the university career which he had hoped for. This, and a number of unsuccessful financial speculations, caused him to look upon his life as a total failure. Of Aron's two brothers, Adrien was a brilliant tennis player who became a dealer in stamps, and Robert abandoned being a philosopher and turned to a respectable but ordinary career in banking.

Raymond Aron seems to have inherited the burden of these disappointments and to be unceasingly asking the same questions: would my father be proud of me, have I justified his hopes, have I been successful? In his case this is more than the filial respect sometimes associated with Jewish families. As we find him turning to past articles, some of them written more than fifty years ago, and asking whether he was right in his judgment or justified in having made some comment, and when we find him disinterring old letters of praise and commendation, then we have to realize the inner doubts and anxieties which must have gnawed at this man who seemed so assured in his opinions and so confident in the efficacy of his logic. Those who attacked him and who are now able to read these pages, and they must be many, will at least have the satisfaction of knowing that they succeeded in wounding this apparently impregnable man.

It is curious that some people should have said that Aron always fell on his feet. On the contrary, he describes a long experience of earning public disapproval. When he returned in his youth from Germany, where he had spent several years teaching, he took up a research post at the École Normale Supérieure under the direction of Cécile Bouglé. There, in 1934, he delivered a lecture on the ideology and the reality of the National Socialist revolution, which was prefaced by some personal remarks about Hitlerian antisemitism and the fact that he himself was Jewish. Bouglé thought that such an introduction was useless, in fact scandalous, since such considerations did not enter into his world. When Aron wrote and presented his thesis, his examiners accepted it, but they were less than enthusiastic about his historical relativism and his criticisms of historical objectivity. One of them expressed the hope that no student would follow his example. When, in June 1940, he joined de Gaulle in London, Aron could not agree with some of the standard practices of Gaullism, such as the condemnation of those who had accepted the armistice in good faith, and the cult of the heroic leader. Later, in spite of his fleeting support for de Gaulle's *Rassemblement du Peuple Français*, and in spite of a personal relationship with the General which seems to have been based upon a genuine mutual respect, he found himself ostracized by the Gaullists. De Gaulle refused to attend a meeting if Aron was to address it, and at a ceremony in 1968 no one had the courage to introduce Aron to the then Minister for the Armies (and future Prime Minister), Pierre Messmer. When he published his attack on left-wing intellectuals in 1955: *L'Optimisme des intellectuels*, he was accused of being jealous of a group which he had not succeeded in joining. His views on the folly of trying to keep Algeria French, his contempt for the student revolt of 1968, his criticism of de Gaulle's expressed view of the Jews as a people that sought to dominate, were all episodes which made Aron the centre of attacks and controversy. His enemies were varied, widespread and eloquent.

It is natural, in these circumstances, that the *Mémoires* should be the occasion for self-defence. It is inevitable, therefore, that a few groups should find themselves being criticized: the mandarins of the Sorbonne; for example, or those Jews who are French by adoption but who seek to behave as if their first loyalty were to Israel. In more personal terms there are a number of remarks about individuals which reveal a certain bitterness. The historian Ernest Labrousse, is instances as someone who had a weakness for his own eloquence. The sociologist, Pierre Bourdieu, is criticized

for turning, in spite of his great intellectual promise, into an intriguer, "un chef de secte, sûr de soi et dominateur". Aron's colleague at *Le Figaro*, Jean d'Ormesson, who resigned with him in 1977 in protest at the growing intervention into the affairs of the paper by its new owner, Robert Hersant, but who happily accepted to return to the paper a few weeks later, is described as a man "qui passe entre les gouttes". Perhaps more devastating than any of these remarks is the almost complete silence about Pierre Mendès France.

Aron could be quick to take offence. In the early days of Giscard's presidency, at a time when the President's private life was attracting the attention of certain scandal-mongers (as when his car collided with a milk-van at the unusual hour of five o'clock in the morning), it was reported that Giscard attributed the press campaign against him to the work of Jewish writers. Immediately Aron wrote him a letter warning him of the deplorable consequences that could follow such remarks (it turned out that Giscard's only evidence concerned an Israeli journalist who had once telephoned the satirical newspaper, *Le Canard enchaîné*). But it is more surprising that we should be taken back to certain rather minor episodes in Aron's past, which clearly still rankled.

There is for example the *soutenance de thèse* of Alain Touraine. This was, as are all *soutenances*, an occasion for intellectual and academic jousting, and the Salle Louis-Liard at the Sorbonne was packed with people who had come to see the triumph of Touraine, already reputed to be then (as he is now) a sociologist of outstanding originality and intellectual elegance. Touraine began the discussion of his main thesis with an eloquent introduction, which Aron describes as having had the élan of a conquistador and which ended with the recital of a poem in Spanish. "Revenons sur la terre" were Aron's first words as he began his comments on Touraine's work, comments which were sharply critical and all the more "devastating" (Aron's own word) because they encouraged his fellow examiners to outbid him in terms of severity. It was said, naturally, that Aron was paying off old scores, that he was jealous of a younger and more brilliant man, that he was concerned to show his intellectual superiority in front of a large audience. Aron claims that he had read and re-read the thesis, that he had consulted an expert on the subject, and that he was justified in pointing out that Touraine had been guilty of using concepts which he did not fully understand. He denies having any ulterior motive, but it is clear that he was affected by the dramatic indignation that some of the audience expressed in an atmosphere which he describes as "irrespirable".

In this revealing incident we can certainly find one of Aron's most intimate preoccupations. He was both a journalist and an academic. He had failed to be appointed to the Sorbonne shortly after the Liberation, because he wrote regularly for *Le Figaro*. When eventually he was appointed, in 1955, it was against much opposition, and he confesses to having been self-conscious as he carried out his work there, anxious to show that he was conscientious and serious because he knew that any lapses would be pounced upon by those who disapproved of *Le Figaro* entering the University. This did not mean undue severity and unrelenting criticism. On one occasion a young man delivered a *leçon* of outstanding brilliance on Thucydides. Aron commented that not since he had heard his fellow-student Sartre give a *leçon* had he heard anything so "dazzling". But it is typical of him that he should use this phrase as a sign of praise and encouragement, in fact Sartre's *leçon* had not been "dazzling", it had rather indicated his intellectual potential. It is also typical that the week following this incident he chose to lecture himself on Thucydides in order to show that the Professor was not too inferior to the pupil. All the same the dual roles of academic and journalist were not accepted by everyone and as Aron scribbled from his home in the boulevard Saint Michel, where he had written his column for *L'Express*, across the Luxembourg Gardens to the École Pratique des Hautes Études, where he directed research, it seems as if he remained uneasy within himself at the

possible rivalry between these two careers. De Gaulle is supposed to have referred to him as "that journalist at the Sorbonne and that Professor at *Le Figaro*". Such remarks were not shrugged off.

Sartre is a constant presence in these pages, and we have to assume that, towards the end of his life at least, Aron reflected more about him than about any other of his acquaintances or colleagues. It is as if, considering the relative success or failure of his own career, he was led to wonder whether Sartre had been more successful than he had. But he is the first to say that Sartre, by the variety of his accomplishments and by the vigour and originality of his talent, was in an entirely different category from himself. Aron is realistic when he says that much of his life has been spent merely commenting upon other men's ideas, and he is sensibly modest when he explains that if he came first in the *agrégation de philosophie* in the year when Sartre unexpectedly failed then this was because he, Aron, was the *bon élève* who simply did what was expected of him in examination ritual. The lesson was immediately learned by Sartre, and it was he who came first the following year. Aron is also modest when he claims that Simone de Beauvoir has a better memory than he has, and that he cannot recall, as she does, those arguments with Sartre where he always successfully entrapped him within some philosophical dilemma.

But it is clear that Aron was haunted by the celebrated phrase, "better to be wrong with Sartre than right with Aron". He points out, legitimately, that the idea that they were opposites is, in fact stupid and first arose out of a misconceived television interview. It seems possible that Sartre first took against Aron shortly after the Liberation, when in a radio discussion programme he automatically assumed that Aron would support him, but Aron preferred a discreet silence. We cannot doubt Aron's affection for Sartre. When, apropos of the plight of the Vietnam boat people, they met together in public, he shook his hand saying, "Bonjour mon petit camarade" (and he tells us that the photograph of this reconciliation has been bought by no less than one hundred different countries). He wrote afterwards to Claude Mauriac, saying that when he saw Sartre, blind, partially paralysed, apparently dying, he was overwhelmed by an immense pity and sympathy. But almost immediately the old Aron reappears. He points out that there is reason to believe that Sartre was not himself moved by this meeting; that perhaps he was not so senile or so ill after all. And in any case, one must not forget all Sartre's foolish errors and unforgivable misjudgments, some of which Aron chooses to comment on at length.

We are faced here with one of the dramas of liberalism. Aron was always conscious of the fragility of his activities. On occasions he was reduced to saying the obvious and sometimes having to repeat it. He was always pursued by the pessimism of a Toqueville or a Benjamin Constant. Nevertheless, his liberalism had to be humane and civilized, based upon loyalty, friendship, understanding and honesty. Therefore he resisted the temptations of being swept away by enthusiasms, whether it was for Marx, for Sartre, for de Gaulle, for Mendès France, though he was affected by all of them. He had to resist his natural impulses, he had to say what he thought was right, he had to criticize, to demolish, to recommend prudence.

If I may finish on a personal note, I remember one evening talking with Aron about Alain de Benoist, "la Nouvelle Droite" and antisemitism (we were in the sixteenth *arrondissement*). He expressed his disapproval of the movement but, as we got into the lift and went down to the ground-floor, he said that one should not hold it responsible for the recrudescence of antisemitism that seemed to be taking place in France. Subsequently we worked out that it was then, when we were in the lift, that a few hundred yards away in the rue Copernic a terrible explosion had taken place outside the synagogue there: the small time we met, although he had no small talk, Aron recalled this coincidence and repeated his conviction that one should not blame "la Nouvelle Droite". He reiterates the same idea in his *Mémoires*. This scrupulousness was the mark of his liberalism.

Adagio misterioso

John Sutherland

GERALDINE BEARE
Index to the *Strand Magazine*, 1891-1950
850pp. Greenwood Press. £70.50.
031321222

In his history of the *Strand Magazine* (1966), Reginald Pound (its third editor) calls it "a mirror of the century". In fact, the *Strand* lasted a sub-century fifty-nine years, from 1891 to March 1950. But given the meagre life expectancy of periodicals, it rates, together with Blackwood's, *Punch* and George Newnes's other creation, *Tit-Bits*, as one of the great survivors of the species.

What Newnes did with the *Strand* was to update George Smith's *Cornhill* formula, which had been standard since 1860. The mix of fiction, general interest article and illustration was enhanced with new technology (especially in picture reproduction), new scales of journalistic circulation (at its peak, *Strand* sold half a million a month, at 6d an issue, compared to *Cornhill*'s high of a hundred thousand at 1s) and new racy styles of fiction. (Newnes clinched the initial success of his journal by making an exclusive contract with Conan Doyle. The *Strand* becomes, and remains, famous as the Sherlock Holmes journal.) There was some political content in the *Strand*, but not much. As Newnes told a higher-minded W. T. Stead:

There is one kind of journalism which directs the affairs of nations. It is magnificent. That is your journalism. There is another kind of journalism which has no such great ambitions. It is content to play on, year after year, giving wholesome and harmless entertainment to crowds of hard-working people craving for a little fun and amusement. It is quite humble and unpretentious. That is my journalism.

Newnes's journalism is represented *par ex-*

The Broad's bibliopole

Nan Bell

ALLYN MORTINGTON
Blackwell's 1879-1979: The History of a Family Firm
190pp. Oxford: Blackwell. £12.50.
046344000

A visitor to Oxford, on his way to the Sheldonian and Bodleian, may often see an elderly gentleman being assisted by his chauffeur out of a discreet black Bentley and moving slowly into Blackwell's shop in Broad Street. This is none other than Sir Basil Blackwell himself, in his ninety-fourth year, returning daily for a few hours of well-informed general supervision of the shop his father founded.

Other manifestations of the Blackwell presence in Oxford abound. Among them are the Music shop and Parker's bookshop (in which Blackwell's has a major interest), and if the visitor has come by train he will have had to pass a bleak black building that is the computerized centre of this international book-keeping empire. In the suburbs there is a headquarters building for Blackwell Scientific Publications, and further out a salubrious but somewhat inaccessible antiquarian department in the historic Eyfield Manor, as striking a contrast with the black-glass Beaver House as one could imagine. The variety of the business is amazing, and its history over the last hundred and more years is an interesting one, competently told by the late Sir Arthur Mortington in a company history which has the special advantage of being able to draw freely on the memoirs and occasional writings of Sir Basil Blackwell, "the Gaffer", himself.

The founder of the firm's own father (who died young, leaving a seamstress widow) had been a bookseller before him. The shop was at the only twelve feet square, with a back room scarcely larger (some of the original shelving is preserved in the Classics section of the Broad Street premises). Gradually it spread, but by plot, over a site as complicated as a labyrinthine vineyard. The slow expansion is a tale of Victorian thrift, energy and diligence. Basil's father, Henry Blackwell, displayed a sort of "prudent simplicity", an unadorned but a painstaking back the steady though small pro-

cellence (his favourite proprietorial phrase) by *Tit-Bits*. Founded in 1881, *Tit-Bits* supplied trivia masquerading as useful information for the masses made literate by the 1870 Education Act. The paper made Newnes, the haberdasher from Manchester, a tycoon. By 1890, "the greatest literary fluke of the century" (Randolph Churchill's judgment) was yielding its owner £30,000 a year. Now an MP and looking to eventual ennoblement, Newnes desired something more respectable. At its most, vulgar, the *Strand* represents its proprietor's idea of what respectability meant: lickspittle deference to the leaders of society. The *Strand*'s hallmark was the kowtowing series "Portraits of Celebrities". It pioneered the slavering fad of the Royals-at-home article. Of all the pieces the *Strand* carried, Newnes was probably proudest of that in the third issue, printed by Royal command, and actually illustrated by the Royal pen, "The Queen's First Baby".

Newnes was shrewd enough to incorporate something of the *Tit-Bits* formula in his new venture. Every issue of the *Strand*, while its proprietor lived, would have one or more articles devoted to "wonders of the world". A typical series in 1896 chronicled "peculiar entertainments". It featured such *faits divers* as the singing strong lady who vocalizes while supporting a piano and pianist on her upflitted stomach, or Cluquet swallowing the 22-inch cavalry sabre.

Despite its metropolitan title, the *Strand* was provincial, and also irredeemably adolescent. Particularly in the fiction that was its main draw, the journal enshrines the boyishness at the heart of imperial England. The two best novelists who regularly contributed, Doyle and Wodehouse, are borderline juvenile writers, who still inspire in their readers a reciprocating juvenile fanaticism. (The *Strand*, which added

up to 30,000 new subscribers with each new Holmes story, sponsored "keep Holmes alive" societies.) In its long run, the *Strand* supported a horde of less worthy adventure writers, from F. Britten Austin and A. E. W. Mason to the ineffably feeble E. Phillips Oppenheim and the brutal "Sapper". Even the journal's most famous non-fiction contributor, Winston Churchill, established himself in its pages as any explorer and the hero of the thriller-cum-autobiography, "My Escape from the Boers".

The *Strand* was its proprietor's creation. But within the presiding Newnesian personality, its most creditable achievements belong to its first editor, H. Greenough Smith, and to the art editor, W. J. K. Boot. Under these two, the magazine was the vehicle for a distinctive form of illustrated fiction. Newnes's philosophy made a virtue of disintegration, the journalism of the paragraph. He discouraged reliance on serialized narratives, running at Victorian three-decker length, from one issue to the next. As a brilliant compromise, the *Strand* developed the short story sequence, centred on a recurring hero who when he caught on became a household name. (Holmes, Raffles, Bulldog Drummond, Albert Campion, Hercule Poirot are among the many who caught on.) The gimmick worked particularly well with the detective story, a genre which the *Strand* virtually owned in the 1890s, when it had the services of Conan Doyle, Grant Allen (who devised Miss Cayley) and Arthur Morrison (creator of Martin Hewitt, Investigator). The line continued in a distinguished descent through Edgar Wallace to Carter Dickson, Margery Allingham, Dorothy Sayers and Agatha Christie. Particularly in the pre-First World War period, one sees in these stories an intimacy between author and illustrator that represents a high point of collaboration. It was, for instance, Sidney Paget, not Doyle, who created the corporeal image of Holmes, sup-

plying the deerstalker and aquiline profile, later incarnated in Basil Rathbone.

By 1930 (when Greenough Smith retired, and Doyle died) the *Strand* was an institution. It had also had its day. Its monthly rhythm was too slow in the face of competition from the *Daily Express* and the BBC. The times required something faster. The weeklies and dailies killed the monthly, just as the *Strand*'s predecessors killed the quarterlies, and the hourly bulletin now throttles the newspaper. Nostalgically, one can relish the cultural adagio that the *Strand* represents. There is an amiable ponderousness about it is everlasting "symposia" where brains trusts of intellectual celebrities solemnly investigate "The Mystery of Baldness", or "If you had to live in a play or a novel, which would you choose?" The Dudeney puzzles, or J. A. Shepherd's seemingly doodled animal "fables", or Heath Robinson's fantastic drawings record an era which had time to kill. Sir Henry Lucy's "From Behind The Speaker's Chair" pieces have a similarly ruminative quality, and with their accompanying Gould cartoons, capture parliament more effectively than (for my money) galloping Simon Hoggart can.

Geraldine Beare's volume is prepared, presumably, as a companion to the journal as it will be acquired by libraries in microfiche form. For anyone using the *Strand* systematically, her book will be an essential tool. She offers a brief history of the journal, and directories of authors, illustrators, articles and selected categories of article (symposia, children's stories, "Portraits of Celebrities"). Work was normally signed or initialled, which has rendered identification easy in most cases. But the compiler has gone to the trouble of turning up authorial dates and has, where possible, penetrated pseudonyms. The quality of sheer painstaking labour that the 859 pages of this compilation represents is awesome, and

founder had died in 1924, there was a consistency of approach to relations between management and staff; alike paternalistic and personalized, that secured a high degree of loyalty on both sides. "My father implanted in his first disciples", Basil Blackwell wrote of one of his father's apprentices who rose high in the firm, "a veneration for scholarship, and to the end of his career to serve the cause of learning was for Will Hunt a mission to be enthusiastically fulfilled, and a matter of extreme good fortune, and high privilege."

Such attitudes encouraged, even in times of economic restriction and on a congested and inconvenient site, major developments in new branches of business, such as periodicals or scientific publishing. "The Gaffer's" part in this is told best in his own words, assembled in a characteristically understated way from obituary notices of former colleagues and other commemorative pieces.

The ground was well prepared for "the Gaffer", Sir Basil's eldest son, Richard, who from 1946 until near his death in 1980, made in his quiet but determined way the changes that saw

turnover increase from £165,000 in 1946 to £27,000,000 in 1980, an expansion rarely needing or using outside financial backing. "Others went to sleep. We didn't. No need to make a long story of it", Richard Blackwell laconically remarked. Norrington covers the period all too briefly, post-war developments being dealt with in less than fifty pages. The record is an impressive one, with the setting up of specialist departments with catalogues enjoying unusual authority as bibliographies of their disciplines, the growth of the export market and the response to the needs of new universities overseas, and the vast development of the scientific publishing division.

Little space is available for the one brief but apparently unsuccessful attempt to introduce outside managerial skills into a business that had used internal talents so effectively, but the impression is given of a family business continuing towards its twelfth decade with confidence and optimism, and not least a pride in the continuing patronage of its nonagenarian president on his daily visits to his office and birthplace.

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The great autodidact would surely have been flattered at the degree of attention which he has recently received. Last year saw the publication of George Spater's handsome, two-volume biography, the first major "Life" of Cobbett since G. D. H. Cole published his classic study almost sixty years ago. Now we have two further contributions: from Daniel Green another substantial biography and a slim volume by Raymond Williams in Oxford's Past Masters series. This renewed interest in Cobbett can, perhaps, be interpreted in two ways; Green, like Spater, writes in the context of a much wider knowledge of Cobbett's letters and manuscripts and, perhaps crucially, at a time when his significance requires evaluation for a fresh generation of readers.

As Cobbett's inclusion in the Past Masters series suggests, we are dealing with a figure who has always occupied a special, if somewhat ambivalent, place in our culture. His appeal has been wide-ranging and belongs to a diverse appreciation which is reflected by both these volumes. Above all, however, Cobbett taps a rich vein of pastoralism and utopianism in the English sensibility. Both of these writers are well-equipped to understand this appeal: Green a former agricultural correspondent for the *Daily Telegraph* and Williams an academic rooted in the pastoral-political idioms which have shaped British society in its responses to industrialization.

Green's biography looks the larger, displaying all the strengths and weaknesses of a labour of love. It is a work of great scholarship, its strength and its weakness, but it yields some useful results. A convincing portrayal of the individuality and quirkiness of Cobbett, which turned a one-time High Tory and villager of Paine into the foremost radical of the post-Waterloo period and the man who was to rescue Paine's bones from obscurity and bring them back to England for an intended, but unrealized, commemoration. Time and again, Cobbett was to find himself at odds with governments, allies, and, latterly, members of his family, through the individualism - some have said egotism - with which he constantly sought to impose himself upon the world.

This egotism, frequently expressed as prejudice, presents problems for anyone trying to categorize Cobbett. Cobbett's prejudices against a range of minorities, including Quakers, Methodists and Jews, whom he saw as parasites upon the "real" England, appears at times to represent a prototype for an authentic English fascism. It is worth hearing his tone, for example as Cobbett talks about the growth of middlemen:

There was that numerous sect, the Quakers, engendered by the Jewish system of usury. Till excises and loan mongering began, these vermin were never heard of in England. They seemed to have been hatched by that fraudulent system, as maggots are bred by putrid meat.

His contempt for intellectuals - the "Scottish philosophers" - was scarcely less forthright:

The truth was, that these men were mere writers: they were writers by trade; they understood that trade pretty well; but they knew nothing of the real situation of this or any other country. Such men knew a great deal about words, but what the devil could they know of men and things, they were extremely enlightened, but they had no knowledge. Hence all this stupid stuff in praise of manufacturing establishments, based on their exaltation at the property of Manchester and Paisley; hence all their everlasting clamour in praise of paper money.

Egotism and prejudice apart, there is the not less serious matter of Cobbett's manifest inability to comprehend the nature of the changes taking place about him. His diagnosis of the causes of rural poverty, so eloquently described in *Rural Rides*, simply do not stand up to serious scrutiny. His failure to recognize the awesome consequences of population

growth - a growth which saw a tripling of population in the hundred years after his birth and which would in almost any circumstances have created serious problems of rural poverty and unemployment - left him blaming his favourite "folk devils", the farmers and the "Pitt system". His reaction against "the Thing" - the web of capital, speculation, and finance spawned by the Napoleonic wars - rendered him incapable of making a serious contribution to political or social analysis. Once stuck in the groove of an essentially pre-industrial battle of "independence" versus "corruption", Cobbett's views remained rooted in a vision of a golden age before the "Pitt system" and "the Thing". Hence towards the end of his life he summed up his political credo: "I wanted to see no innovation in England. All I wished and all I strove for, was the Constitution of England, undefiled by corruption." To him, the innovators were "the aristocracy and the usurers", who had imposed upon the mythical England of Cobbett's childhood a new world of commerce and industry, new laws, higher taxation, a standing army, and repressive measures - a catalogue familiar to the "country party" for at least a century before Cobbett's death.

Perhaps the fundamental difficulty in dealing with Cobbett is the misunderstanding of what the word "reform" meant to a man coming to maturity in the latter part of the eighteenth century. The starting point for this view of parliamentary reform was, as Cobbett indicated, a return to a pristine state from which corruption had been rooted out. Such demands were likely to be triggered off by some real or

imagined evidence of gross mismanagement by the government of the day. For most of the political nation of eighteenth-century England the dimensions of reform went no further than a curtailment of patronage - "Economic Reform" of the kind promoted by Burke - or proposals for making the existing system more representative through shorter parliaments and a redistribution of seats which would shift the balance from the rotten boroughs to the counties. For Cobbett the decisive moment in his espousal of the cause of parliamentary reform came over the cost and conduct of the war against Napoleon. Only gradually did he broaden out from this essentially "country" platform to the notion of extending the franchise, first to tax-payers, and ultimately to all males over the age of eighteen.

The ability to handle this aspect of Cobbett's evolution and the context in which it occurred is a crucial test in any appreciation of him as a historical figure. His career did not witness a simple transition from Toryism to radicalism, but rather a continuum in which a number of important, if often contradictory, elements appear. Thus within twelve months of "Petterloo" and the Six Acts, when Cobbett had already championed a major democratic extension of the franchise, he could be found staging-managing the attempt of George IV's estranged wife, Caroline of Brunswick, to claim her title as Queen, and be found, on his daughter's testimony, acting the "perfect courtier" and playing blindman's buff with the "reversionary interest". Cobbett remained a monarchist and a patriot, wherever else his arguments might take him. A letter to an

American friend written in March, 1832 comes close, perhaps, to expressing in a totally ingenuitous way, much of the true Cobbett:

You will see, that we are going to have the Reform that I used to talk so much about: Those terrestrial devils, Castlereagh, Liverpool and Canning are all gone to their father below. We shall have as cheap a government as yours and (which I tell you as a secret) we shall not let the "American Navy" swaggar so. I like your country very well; but the world was not made for any navy but that of England to swaggar in.

But Cobbett also proved a forerunner of what might be called Victorian respectability in his eulogies on hard work, sober habits, and a happy domestic life. As Green rightly notes, there are elements in him as in his contemporary, Francis Place, which foreshadow the self-help philosophy of Samuel Smiles and the mid-Victorian era.

Both of these books will advance the cause of Cobbett among a new generation of readers. While Green's biography suffers from an odd distribution of effort, notably in the devotion of only three chapters of the nineteen to the latter part of his career from 1812, arguably the most interesting and influential period of his life, it has a vigour and directness which will earn it a worthy place on the shelves of many a public library. Professor Williams clearly has the harder task, to encapsulate Cobbett into a mere ninety pages is always going to be impossible. It is a tribute to Williams that there is scarcely a paragraph wasted. Few will fail to profit from his book and it should fulfil its primary task of encouraging people to read Cobbett for themselves.

fifty years in politics, but never became a politician. She herself remarks that it was particularly unfortunate that his chosen field was foreign policy, since that was where his political deficiencies were most marked. He was at his weakest, she suggests, in his "confrontational atmosphere". He could not bluff England's foreign adversaries, and the scholarly temperament that enabled him to see both sides of any question also made it difficult for his dunderheaded diplomats to discern quite what it was he wanted. His despatches, one colleague early on observed, too often read like essays.

Aberdeen was also an apprehensive and ineffectual speaker in Parliament, and in his awkwardness he often gave offence by desists into sneering. In both these defects he bore a striking resemblance to the early Palmerston, with whom he also shared an interest in the young ladies of the House of Cavendish and a persistent need to supplement his income with an official salary. Even in the management of foreign affairs Aberdeen showed characteristics more commonly associated with his rival's name. The Queen rebuked him for sending off instructions before she had had an opportunity to approve or change them; he avoided discussion of his policy in Cabinet by withholding information from his colleagues; and he conducted affairs too often through private rather than official communications. (One thing, however, that Chamberlain is wrong to attribute to Aberdeen, when it more properly belongs to Palmerston, is the invention of the phrase "cordial good understanding", which she says was then translated into *entente cordiale*.)

What were his crimes in Palmerston, were mere peccadilloes in Aberdeen, but if he was Palmerston's moral superior, he was a relative pygmy where technique and tactics were concerned. In one of his frequent strolches on foreign "bureaucracy", Palmerston remarked that Foreign Ministers in France habitually left the details of their business to underlings when they ought to have realized that "it is details that make up results". This is a view Chamberlain seems to share when she admits that Aberdeen "sometimes went into negotiations ill-informed, and badly prepared". Although apparently conscientious and usually hard-working, he perhaps lacked the stamina, or possibly the will, to master the details of his case. He put his faith in his fellow men and not in protocols. Hence he was extraordinarily casual in his approach to some of the most important of his diplomatic negotiations.

Dr Chamberlain herself seems pretty sound on details but, with the principal exception of Aberdeen's youthful essays into professional diplomacy, her coverage of his policies is usually too patchy and too piecemeal to constitute a final judgment. She seems, however, to confirm the notion that his arrangements with Guizot about the Spanish Marriages were, as his own Prime Minister complained, dangerously obscure, and adds that, despite his best intentions, he failed fully to inform his successor. It was, in part, Aberdeen's knowledge of his own culpability in both respects that curbed his criticism of Palmerston's subsequent handling of that unfortunate affair. Chamberlain acknowledges, too, that he was at least as careless in the initial instructions he gave to Ashburton in 1841 to settle the Maine boundary and other disputes with the United States. She ought also to have noted his clumsy handling of the instructions about the Oregon Territory he later gave to Pakenham, leaving them initially to his under-secretary, Adington, who though he had first-hand knowledge of the matter was notoriously anti-American. Chamberlain remarks, incidentally, that Aberdeen was unlucky to lose Backhouse as his under-secretary; but she does not explain how he came to choose as his successor a man who Palmerston and Grey had ten years earlier agreed was too stupid, and too biased, to continue in the diplomatic career. And although she maintains that Aberdeen was at his best perhaps as head of a department, she says extraordinarily little about his day-to-day management of one of the great offices of state.

The ultimate test of Aberdeen's career, of course, was his part in the coming of the war to the Crimea. In some respects Chamberlain makes out a good case for him as Prime Minister. In very difficult circumstances, he successfully brought together in one administration a collection of the brightest political talents; the "Whigs and Peelites", he probably deserves more credit than Palmerston for the formation of the Liberal Party. But so far as the war with Russia is concerned, it is the same old story. The Duke of Bedford noted of the Spanish Marriages affair that either Aberdeen or Palmerston would have handled it better if he had had untrammelled control. As it was, the weakness of the one had been followed by the foibles of the other. The tragedy of the Eastern crisis of 1854-4 was that they were in the Cabinet together, pulling both ways at once.

The setting for a tragedy

Richard Proudfoot

PETER W. M. BLAYNEY
The Texts of "King Lear" and their Origins:
Volume 1, Nicholas Okes and the First Quarto
740pp. Cambridge University Press. £50.
0521 22634 1

Peter W. M. Blayney's claim that the purpose of Volume One of his large monograph is "to lay the bibliographical foundation for a study of the text of *Lear*" may seem presumptuous. Even if we restrict the topic to the quarto of 1608 which is Blayney's main subject in this volume, we might be forgiven for believing that the work of earlier bibliographers, Sir Walter Greg and Fredson Bowers among them, had raised at least a few corners of visible superstructure. This book, however, goes far to justify its author's temerity. Without undervaluing their achievement, Blayney qualifies, modifies, corrects and on occasion subverts most of the assumptions and all the conclusions of his predecessors.

More exactly, he carries the bibliographical analysis of the first quarto of *King Lear*, printed by Nicholas Okes for Nathaniel Butter and issued in 1608, further than any such analysis of an Elizabethan or Jacobean play quarto yet published. His account of Okes and his printing-shop is likewise wider in scope and fuller in detail than the few comparable studies of English printers of the period. Future study of the quarto text of *Lear* will inevitably rely on his work as its basis, if only because no future student of the subject is likely to find funding for seven years work on it.

The importance to Shakespearean editors of the quarto text of *King Lear*, which preserves some 300 lines of the play not present in the ostensibly more authoritative text in the First Folio, and from which, in some sense, the Folio text is derived, is self-evident. Yet uncertainty has shrouded all aspects of Okes's quarto and *Lear*. Its status as the true first edition was established beyond question only in the early years of this century. Observed irregularities in methods of printing and proof-reading have hitherto been subject only to piecemeal investigation and have yielded highly speculative explanations, while the nature, status and provenance of the manuscript from which it was printed continue to be variously defined, each new investigator proposing a new hypothesis. Blayney's decision to devote so thorough a study to it needs no special defence, and is in itself symptomatic of a growing unease among Shakespeare scholars about the traditional edited text of *Lear*, in which, broadly speaking, the role of the quarto has been to supplement and correct the Folio; while at the same time bearing the stigma of textual corruption and possibly of memorial degeneration, or at least of irregular publication. The final aim of Blayney's work must be to address directly the question of the status and interrelation of the two early texts. However, the 740 pages of Volume One aim only at clearing the bibliographical ground, leaving textual criticism for Volume Two.

The separation of bibliographical analysis from textual criticism is itself Blayney's point of departure, and the first evidence of the importance and interest of his book for readers other than editors of Shakespeare. At every stage of his investigation he begins by conducting an inclusive and well-informed enquiry into the assumptions and methods that are current in Shakespearean textual studies. Here he follows the lead of D. F. McKenzie, whose 1969 essay "Printers of the Mind" can be felt as the prime mover of much of his argument. Equally, his practical techniques owe much to the work of Charlton Hinman and his followers on the printing of the First Folio, though here his sustained attempt to distinguish between the problems of analysing folio and quarto books constitutes a valuable extension of bibliographical technique and theory and will make his book obligatory reading for all future editors of plays printed in quarto.

The essence of his method is meticulous accumulation of very large numbers of facts - about the careers of Nicholas Okes, his predecessors and his heirs; facts about the physical materials used in his shop; facts about the books (and parts of books) which he printed between about 1604 and 1610; facts

about the methods of imposition and of stop-press correction which those books reveal; facts about paper-stocks and watermarks; and, centrally, facts about the smallest details of *King Lear*, 1608, notably about 571 identifiable pieces of type whose recurrence provides evidence for a detailed conjectural account of the typesetting and type distribution. More than half of the volume is occupied by seven appendices in which the facts are detailed. But for all his necessary fact-finding, Blayney is no Gradgrind. His facts are there to be interpreted. One is never allowed to forget the focal question of *King Lear* and the argument, for all its particularity, is enlivened by a style which, though hardly terse, is lively, contentious and at moments witty.

We are given a remarkably full picture of the printing of the quarto. Okes was later to print a succession of works by the leading playwrights of his day, Beaumont's *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*, Webster's *The White Devil* and Shakespeare's *Othello* among them, but *King Lear* was his first play. It was printed in the weeks immediately preceding and following the Christmas holiday of 1607, his first year as a master-printer. The paper was supplied by Nathaniel Butter. Type was set seriatim, starting with the title-page, rather than by cast-off formes - a method perhaps dictated by copy which may have been hard to cast off accurately, and one which clearly strained the resources of Okes's pica roman font. One compositor set alone until sheet G. Three passages in the later sheets, all beginning and ending in mid-page, were set by a second compositor, slower and less experienced than his partner. He appears to have worked in alternation with the first man, though he set his first two stints from a separate type-case. The inner forme was generally imposed first but, except in sheets C and I, the outer was the first to be printed. All formes underwent proof-correction before presswork began. As this first proof-reading was sometimes done without reference to copy, revises of several formes were read against copy after they went to press and stop-press correction (reflected in the variant readings of the twelve known surviving copies) was carried out. Neither the proof-reading nor the ensuing correction was thorough or always accurate. These conclusions, mostly derived from interpretation of patterns of type recurrence or from anomalous disruptions of those patterns, are the main findings of the book. Some may seem familiar, though they are argued here with strengthened authority; others, notably those about the typesetting and proofing, are new. Their effect is to sharpen awareness of how far a sense of inadequacy in the quarto text of *Lear* may be attributable to the intervention of a mediocre printer who, while "not deliberately doing his worst, . . . was not doing his best".

But Blayney's study is as much concerned with context as with analysis. The discussion of the printing of *Lear* itself gains sharpness of definition from the information about printing processes, both in Okes's shop and elsewhere, with which the book abounds. His achievement is to restore the printing of Q1 *Lear* to the world of normal Jacobean business activity and to counteract any anachronistic assumption of the importance to its printer and publisher of a book whose comparative lack of success in its time led to a twelve-year gap before the first reprint. He faces the possibility that his material may not always afford conclusive results, conceding, for instance, that the habits of two compositors need not differ much from each other, or wryly observing that a "compositor can only exercise a preference if the sort-boxes permit". He admits the conjectural status of his complex reconstruction of the interrelation between typesetting and distribution. Indeed, his awareness that "the limitations of the methods should not be obscured by exaggerating their dependability" lays him open to the related charges of claiming too much reliability for his own conjectures and of too great a readiness to demonstrate the shortcomings of earlier investigators. In general, though, his own consciousness of the risk and the thoroughness of his enquiry combine to provide an adequate defence.

Minor doubts and qualifications nevertheless less arise from time to time. Casting-off of copy was undertaken for costing as well as for allocation of copy-stints to compositors and would

therefore hardly have proceeded only quire by quire. The twelve extant copies provide a narrow base for generalizations - such as those about the stacking of the paper during the presswork - about an edition of 500 or 750 (Blayney's guess at the edition size), and his concession of the point can't alter the fact. The practice of describing a line set to the full measure as "justified" and a short line as "unjustified", though well established, is incorrect: every line of type must be justified or risk perishing in a pie. In assessing the likely size of Okes's font of pica roman by comparison with figures drawn from Smith's *Printer's Grammar*, 1755, Blayney rightly relates Okes's comparative excess of u's to changes in English orthography between 1608 and 1755: the same explanation could be extended to his excess of three other sorts, l, w and y.

One more serious reservation about method will enter the mind of anyone who has attempted to analyse the printing of an Elizabethan or Jacobean play quarto. Blayney's identification of damaged types is supported by a full table of occurrences which locates them by sort, page and line, and not by word or letter. His methods of identification, including magnification and careful elimination of all doubtful instances, leave him with a total of some 2,000 appearances of 571 identified types, most of them lower-case. Nothing short of total repetition of his work can serve to challenge or vindicate his identifications, but despite his consciousness of such complicating factors as variation of inking, or impression (not to mention flaws originating in the matrix, to which he makes no reference), it may reasonably be doubted whether any independent investigator would produce exactly the same identifications or list of recurrences, especially of those letters which are most vulnerable to common kinds of damage, such as bending of the ascenders of b, d and h, or breaks in the circumference of o. The book is well supplied with photographic plates and figures, but none illustrates the recurrence of any of the damaged types. In addition, even a brief spot-check reveals inaccuracies in the record of recurrences given in Appendix Four. Lines K37, G423 and H12 contain no upper-case W's: the three identified types listed would seem to occur instead at lines K39, G422 and H112. The amount of evidence adduced is doubtless sufficient to sustain the main conclusions, even if some of the identifications should prove questionable, but it remains odd that a study which is elsewhere so self-critical should leave room for doubt about evidence so crucial to its main argument.

Naturam expellat furca licet; usque recurat. For all his stated intention to devote this volume to bibliography and to postpone textual criticism to the next, Blayney, being merely human, can hardly tackle the proofing and stop-press correction of the quarto without revealing just that tendency to get the two mixed up which he has justly deprecated in his foregoers. The most pessimistically cautionary chapter in his book describes the relation between that portion of Sir Antony Sherley's *Relation of his Trauels in Persia*, 1613, which Okes printed, and the text of the same work in Bodleian Library MS Ashmole 829 iv. Although a scribal transcript seems likely to have intervened between the extant manuscript and the printed book, Blayney believes that direct reference to this manuscript was made during the proof-reading. He takes wicked pleasure in demonstrating that careful and responsible deduction from the press-variants of the printed book could lead to totally

erroneous conclusions about the presumed readings of the manuscript.

His cautions do not, however, restrain his own imaginative reconstruction of the physical process of the proofing of *Lear* in support (or rationalization) of his own textual conjectures. The results are interestingly variable, ranging as they do from near demonstration to extreme implausibility. He has convincing arguments for proposing emendation of the quarto text at K11-2 (IV vi 224) to "send thee boot, to boot" and for regarding the uncorrected version, "to saue thee", as a misreading and the corrected one, "to boot, to boot", as a miscorrection. At E2720 (II ii 140), once more plausibly, he urges the adoption of "contemned" in place of Q/F "contemnedst", though the grounds are less compelling. Altogether less convincing is the ingenious conjecture that wet ink from corrections marked at H224 (IV ii 24), combined with a rather unlikely way of folding the proof-sheet, led to blots on H3 and the consequent mistaken deletion of "rogish" from line 24 of that page (II vii 103). The full hazards of conjecture are revealed by Blayney's interpretation of the absence of the catchword of E1 from one of the Bodleian copies as a result of a tear in the leaf. The tear is minutely examined and then alleged as evidence for a conscious intention to remove an objectionable word. This, we are told, could only be "Kunr" (for "Kenr"). The hypothesis is offered without reference either to the likely dimensions of the uncorrect leaf, in which the tear must have been much more conspicuous and unsightly than now, or to the oddness of a decision to expunge a single word by so disfiguring an expedient rather than by erasure or inking out. The wholly hypothetical "Kunr" thus enters the record as an uncorrected reading of Q *Lear*. In the author's own judicious words, "even the most soundly-argued and plausible textual hypotheses are not bibliographical facts", nor should they be treated as if they were.

Bibliographical knowledge can improve, by increasing their definition, the conditions in which conjectural emendation may be attempted. Conversely, a sharply visual imagination, reinforced by formally detailed command of Jacobean printing practices, can open the door to new prodigies of conjecture, the more appealing, or insidious, for their detailed plausibility. The gulf fixed between bibliographical fact and editorial conjecture remains great. This volume invites respect and attention for its painstaking and honest attempt to live up to the highest standards of accuracy in its bibliographical analysis and for its major contribution to correcting misapprehensions about the normal processes of Jacobean printing. Blayney deserves nothing but praise for his essay in one preliminary branch of what Housman called "the science of discovering error in texts": assessment of his skill and judgment in "the art of removing it" must await Volume Two.

As Volume Two will also doubtless supplement the list of errata already supplied for Volume One, a few items may be contributed: Appendix Two is headed "Checklist of books, 1604-9" but is described in the text (p37) as covering only 1605-09; a handful of footnotes numbered 1 are announced by the index 11 in the text (eg pp159, 192, 193), while that on p220 is unnumbered; the second section on p159 has "H1" for "H11" in its first line; and apostrophes are missing from "B's" and "C's" in the third paragraph on p160.

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Joining the opposition

Ben Pimlott

JAMES HINTON
Labour and Socialism: A History of the British Labour Movement 1867-1974
212pp. Brighton: Harvester. £15.95
(paperback £5.95).
07108 01548

It was once said of Arthur Henderson, architect of the modern Labour Party, that when he spoke of the Labour Movement you could hear the capital "M". Listening to the contenders for the posts of party leader and deputy leader in 1983, one was tempted to say that one could hear the small "I". It is also tempting to make an easy equation between the Labour Movement and the Labour Party. Such an equation is, however, highly misleading, as this admirable and timely history makes clear.

The Labour Movement has always been a concept rather than an institution - bearing the same relation to "unions" or "party" as the concept of "nation" bears to "country". It is an idea in the collective imagination of those who regard themselves as members. The Labour Movement is not just the trade unions or just the Party. Nor, as James Hinton points out, is it simply to be identified with the class it claims to represent. For most of the history of the Movement, a majority of working-class people have not belonged to any trade union or cooperative body, and have not voted for the candidates of working-class parties.

Nevertheless, the concept contains a class element that is quite distinct from particular policy or ideological claims. The Labour Movement is of the labouring classes as well as for them. Middle-class people may be converted to socialism, and join the Labour Party. When, however, they describe themselves as belonging to the Labour Movement they always do so self-consciously, like immigrants who know that, however loyal, they can never be fully assimilated into the culture of their adopted land. Hinton follows this line, and writes of class "alliances", but adds "It is the standpoint of the working-class adherents of these alliances that remains centre stage".

The Labour Movement expresses a class interest. Yet it has always seen itself, in addition, as an expression of moral concerns that transcend the aim of protecting particular groups. "What constituted labour as a movement was the belief that each struggle was, or could be, linked to a larger social purpose", observes the author. Embodied in the network of working-class institutions and practices there existed a sense of class identity "whose common objective was the creation, bit by bit, of a fairer and a more co-operative social order". It has been a common objective so vague, however, as

scarcely to have provided a common approach, let alone a common ideology. The strongest and most interesting theme of Hinton's book is the account it presents of the historic divisions within the Movement, rooted in wider splits within the working class.

The Labour Movement, Hinton reminds us, was produced both by the desire of skilled workers to protect their skills and privileges against the encroachments of casual labour, and by the gradual erosion of distinctions within the working class which stood in the way of a common sense of identity. Labour aristocrats in the late nineteenth century, "cutting themselves off from the street and pub culture of the poor", often felt closer to small businessmen than to the unskilled. The formation of the Labour Movement followed closely the development of a more homogeneous working class as a result of Britain's decline in world markets, and of depression, unemployment and the onslaughts of employers, in the forty or fifty years preceding the First World War. In 1880 the "movement" was no more than a tiny sect: barely 4 per cent of the occupied population were unionized. By 1914 this figure had risen to a quarter, and half of all union members were affiliated to the newly formed Labour Party, which held 42 seats in the House of Commons.

The Labour Party itself was a casual, almost accidental, by-product of rapid union growth - a response to employer counter-attacks against the "New Unionism". Once established, the Movement's so-called "political wing" had only a limited importance. Its parliamentary representatives were hostages to a pact with the Liberals which, so far from dooming the Labour Party, ensured the quiescence of working-class MPs who dared not jeopardize the



George Lansbury, leader of the Labour Party from 1931 to 1933, at a children's party with his grandchildren in 1937; from *Those Were the Days* - 1919-1939 published by Deni.

arrangement for fear of losing their seats. Except in the imagination of a few socialist agitators, the Labour Party did not have governmental pretensions. There was indeed remarkably little pressure from either the Party or the Movement to extend the franchise to the voteless poor.

What turned Labour into a major party was the simultaneous collapse of Liberalism, the introduction of universal male suffrage and a huge increase in union activity and militancy produced by wartime conditions. Growing unionization was itself related to a decline in the division between labour aristocracy and casual poor - a division which had hindered the development of an independent working-class political organization before 1914. Nevertheless, working-class "unity" fell far short of a universal fraternity of manual labour. Though covering a wider social territory than in the nineteenth century, trade unionism continued to ignore the unemployed and un-unionized (mainly women), who gained less from the Labour Movement than from a welfare state that was largely Liberal in inspiration.

Hinton's account, in the best *History Workshop* tradition, is from the bottom up. He is most at home before the First World War, and least at home after the second. The contrast between the early part of the book, with its sharp perceptions of social and economic nuance among the Victorian working-classes, and the author's less inspired chronicling of the failures of the first two Wilson administrations, is a reminder of how much more interest has been aroused in the labour historical movement (if we may call it that) by makers of the working class than by their mid and late twentieth-century inheritors.

Implicit in Hinton's view is the failure, or

perhaps unimportance, of political leaders - who appear with notable infrequency in his chapters. (When they do appear they are often misspelt. Is this an unconscious sign of disrespect? Atlee, who is mentioned more often than most, is permitted, with rigorous consistency, only one "i". Crosland always appears with two "s". Mikardo is spelt as in the opera. Arthur Greenwood, mentioned once, is confused with his son Anthony. "Clement Atlee and Anthony Greenwood", we are told, "represented Labour in the five-man War cabinet".) Underlying Hinton's analysis are traces of the "we wuz robbed" outlook characteristic of a less sophisticated and more explicitly Marxist school: the assumption that the working class has a socialist destiny and that its proper path would be in a socialist, perhaps even revolutionary, direction were it not diverted and weakened at every turn by its own divisions and mistakes.

Here lies a contradiction. For what the book so admirably reveals is that for all the idealism of individuals, the Labour Movement is not and cannot be a crusade. Rather it is a social phenomenon, reflecting class changes and economic fluctuations, and expressing the mood of what Hinton calls an "oppositional culture." The contradiction is particularly evident in the author's discussion of the 1945 Atlee administration. On the one hand, he appears to congratulate the Labour government for putting through "a major programme of social reforms" despite "inauspicious circumstances". On the other, he implies that the government's actions were disappointing: its measures "judged against the expectations of many socialists" left much to be desired; its nationalization programme was scarcely more bold than in other Western European countries.

Neither the broad question of interpretation, nor the trivial but irritating errors, should however be allowed to detract from the very real merits of this tightly written and provocative essay, which is likely to replace its predecessors as a general introductory text. It is fashionable, on the left as well as on the right of the spectrum, to regard the Labour Movement as in many respects an enemy of progress. Almost in spite of himself Hinton shows how great the achievement has been - the achievement not of a vanguard, but of a wide and heterogeneous range of the politically and socially minded members of a class.

The most hard-won freedoms are the least remembered. At the beginning of the story, seven women were gaoled, under the existing law, for saying "bah" to a blackleg. However statuesque the contemporary "Movement" may at times appear, its historic victory may be judged by comparing Britain - even in the reign of Tubbitt and Thatcher - with countries where saying "bah" remains an imprisonable offence.

particular style of organization, and ILP entrism encountered quite different problems in different unions. In the case of mining, of course, each colliery had its own special character.

The most stimulating section of this large book is the discussion of the policies and ideas of the ILP in the early years; necessary, indeed crucial, for an appreciation of the Labour Party in the twentieth century. Howell notes that the parliamentary tradition was fully accepted by advanced working-class radicals in the 1880s, and that in time electoral politics would also come to absorb more and more of the ILP's energies; that the state and state power were regarded as equivalent with a parliamentary majority; that the ILP remained "largely bewitched" by an identification of "capitalism" with "laissez-faire", so that almost any state involvement in economic and social life was equated with steps along the road to socialism; and that the ILP's analysis of the economy assumed it was twisted and thwarted by the parasitic institutions of landlordism and monopoly, and that once these were curbed, controlled or removed, there would emerge something approaching a just social order. "At a more fundamental level," Howell writes with the hindsight of the 1970s, "there lurked a tacit and unsupported assumption that modernization could occur without damaging the pro-

pects of industrial workers". Most members of the ILP, and of the Labour movement in general, continued for at least the first half of the twentieth century with a passionate hostility towards the system they lived under, and a markedly untheoretical appreciation of its construction, save of the most simplistic kind.

Howell notes that the principal spokesmen for the ILP in its early days were largely self-taught: "Carlyle and Ruskin were typically formative influences; Dickens and, from a more distant Radical past, Bunyan added their weight. Popularisations of historical and biological works were significant. Scots were attracted to Burns. It was a rich inheritance." Was it? A much used argument, of course, can be agreed that the Romantic critique of capitalism is a necessary component of any serious theory; but it is not enough; and the intellectual and political history of the Labour Party is surely eloquent testimony to its deficiencies.

This is a highly competent and instructive text, one that eschews simplified answers to what are complicated questions; and it offers an analysis that probes the gritty and difficult problems of the early Labour movement. Since most of those problems are still with us, this is also a book for the present.

Living off the peasants

Elie Kedourie

JOHN R. KAUTSKY
The Politics of Aristocratic Empires
432pp. University of North Carolina Press.
£23.80
08078 15020

In 1767 a Jacobite émigré, Sir James Stewart, published, from his European exile, *An Inquiry into the Principles of Political Economy*. The first two books of this work constitute an attempt to discover how men's government and their manner of satisfying their wants are connected with one another, and under what influence and in what way government and economic activity undergo change. In particular Stewart sought to show how, from being feudal and military, politics became free and commercial. His discussion provides many illuminating contrasts and arresting distinctions. Thus he opposes a military to a commercial state of society. The first is based on the assertion of power: the Punic wars "exalted the grandeur of plundering Rome, and blotted out the existence of industrious Carthage". In modern commercial society the arbitrary has given way to the systematic: modern luxury "cannot make one step, but at the expense of adequate equivalent and without producing a vibration in the balance of... wealth". Another memorable distinction is that between the Lacedaemonian form of government, which may be compared to the wedge, "the most solid and compact of all the mechanical powers", and that of modern states, which are like watches liable continually to go wrong, "and the workman's hand becomes necessary to set it right".

Now, over two centuries later, comes John Kautsky, whose preoccupations in *The Politics of Aristocratic Empires* bring to mind Stewart's earlier inquiry. For the term "aristocratic empire", Kautsky offers a strict, stipulative definition. By it he does not wish us to understand an extensive tract of land ruled by men of good or noble birth - which is what the words might mean in ordinary discourse. An agrarian society for him is "a ruling class in an agrarian economy that does not engage in productive labour lives wholly or primarily off the labor of peasants", and "a pure traditional aristocracy" is "a political entity that contains an aristocracy and is unaffected by commercialization or any other form of modernization".

If Kautsky is asked which particular empire would fit into his straitjacket of a definition, his answer would be: none in particular. He considers himself a comparatist in search of general regularities, a political scientist whose purpose is to provide generalizations about politics. He aims to construct what is called an ideal type of the politics of aristocratic empires, and thus seeks "to abstract from the infinitely complex and messy reality of history what I consider to be the essential and unchanging elements of the politics of traditional aristocratic empires". He admits to being methodologically, but in spite of this, of his partiality to abstraction, and of his quest for the essential and unchanging, he claims that his book is not ahistorical, denying that his ideal type is to be found only in heaven. The claim is difficult to sustain if only because the pursuit of the essential and unchanging cannot be part of the historical enterprise, which does not deal in essences, and of which change is the life-blood.

His reference to "the messy reality of history" confirms, if need be, such an impression. The author is above toiling his hands with the minutiae of under-labourers carry out "the primary research" which the comparatist homogenizes, and packages according to his high academic purpose.

But should the under-labourers quarrel among themselves, the comparatist is left high and dry. Perry Anderson - himself, it is true, no great journeyman - believes, we are told, that "the classical world was massively, unalterably rural in its basic quantitative proportions". Hence, though Sparta had two kings and a small territory, "we will still call it an aristocratic empire, and so we will Rome, both under the Republic and the Empire. But when the Roman Empire sets in, the Roman Empire ceases to be an aristocratic empire and will rather be a medieval period in Western

Europe. So far so good. But no sooner have we, breath bated and fingers crossed, thought to negotiate, on tiptoe, the delicate passage from antiquity to feudalism, than an insidious footnote rears its ugly head. This fratricidal footnote makes bold to speak as follows: For a very different interpretation by another Marxist writer, see Wason, *Class Struggles in Ancient Greece*, who says: "In the Greek city states affected by the economic revolution there grew up a merchant class powerful enough to smash the old state structure and social hierarchy. After a period of dictatorship exercised through tyrants, they established bourgeois republics, or city states based essentially on the merchant class with the support at first of peasants and artisans; states in which trade and finance eventually dominated the whole life of the community" (p. 50). On how Greek terrain and climate discouraged the development of an aristocracy fighting on horseback and of a centralized bureaucracy or priesthood (the implacable footnote continues), see Gouldner, *Enter Plato*, pp. 5-9.

Nor is the battle between Wason, Gouldner and Anderson the only *mêlée* in which the poor helpless comparatist finds himself at the mercy of his servants, now dialectically transformed into his masters. A page or two later Sung economic history occasions another epic encounter in which the redoubtable Anderson is joined by Mark Elvin, Marshall Hodgson, Barrington Moore, Etienne Balazs and Wolfgang Eberhard - so many mighty logomachs in all the glory of their flying banners, their clashing armour and their rich caparisons.

The economic history of classical Greece, Sung China, the Caliphate etc. - itself, heaven knows, afflicted with sparseness of evidence and other dubieties - is then a treacherous bog, no foundation for the clean, soaring, audacious lines of Kautsky's comparatist castles. But he is constrained to choose this terrain because he believes - in this following his grandfather, Karl Kautsky, to whom he dedicates his book - that economic change is an independent vari-

able which explains the dependent variable of political change. The key to the understanding of aristocratic empires lies in the relations of production: wherever warriors exploit peasants, there is an aristocratic empire. Time, place, circumstance do not matter. Thus we read: "the British aristocracy and the French peasantry and their institutions and ideologies are not at all wholly different from the Indian aristocracy and the Chinese peasantry and their institutions and ideologies." Surely the word "wholly" is here a needlessly weak-minded concession which will spoil the symmetry of the argument and only cause confusion. This slight doubt apart, a "beneficial" result of the study of aristocratic empires in such a perspective is the overcoming of the sharp distinction between the politics of "Western" and the politics of "non-Western" societies, "a distinction which has tended to interfere with the comparative study of politics".

The Marxist master-key will open many, many doors. We thus can now see that not only monarchy, but also the division of armed forces into officers and men, and the notions of honour and glory are mere remnants of the traditional aristocratic order. Nay more, we begin to realize that it is "aristocratic ideology" which has deceived us into believing that warfare is inseparable from the human condition. What we now see clearly is that "wars of conquest are associated not with inborn universal human traits but with the interests of certain social groups living under certain conditions". Again, Roman law, with its clear-cut notion of property as an absolute right to use and abuse, was clearly a product of the "commercialized Roman empire" and was readopted by Western Europe when it became commercialized, and its new commercial classes needed a clear-cut concept of property. It is of course a mere

detail whether Rome as an aristocratic empire had a notion of property different from that which obtained when commerce became dominant. It is another mere detail whether in fact Roman law was adopted in the West as a result of pressure by the medieval equivalent of Aims of Industry. If so, how is it that commercialized, capitalist England retains to the present day the concept of leasehold and freehold? It is no doubt a picturesque and quaint survival, like the old-fashioned distinction between officer and private.

There is, again, the small matter of private property. "What matters to us here", declares Kautsky, "is not the particular system of property in land that prevails, but the control by the aristocracy of the land, that is, of the peasants." This is because mere legal forms mask and mystify the real issue, which is that of the respective shares of the product of the land received by the peasant and the aristocrat - and this does not stand in any necessary relationship to the property system. This valuable piece of demystification will surely serve to shed light on many seemingly remote issues. Thus, with the help of these observations, a definitions buff, tinkering with a bit of transformative logic, should have little trouble in establishing that the Soviet Union is a living example of aristocratic empire - which would thus at last emerge from the shadowy world which ideal types inhabit. This would be the breakthrough to a unified and really universal comparative science.

If Sir James Stewart were to compare - blessed word - *The Politics of Aristocratic Empires* with his own *Inquiry*, would he, we wonder, find the later work to be a proof and illustration of that "regular progress of mankind" which he firmly believed can be discerned in the course of history?

Governing naturally

Michael Loewe

ROBERT AMES
The Art of Rulership: A study in ancient Chinese political thought
277pp. University of Hawaii Press. \$25.
0 8248 0825 8

The last two centuries before the present era were a crucial period for the formation of political thought in China. It was then that experiments in imperial rule were extended for the first time over the greater part of the sub-continent and that imperial rule was accepted as the single legitimate authority which could command the loyalty, obedience and service of the population. The institutions evolved at this time drew on the earlier practices of the several states and kingdoms that had existed hitherto side by side, often in antagonism, and they owed much to the various teachings of the pre-imperial philosophers. These institutions also formed the basis upon which the later imperial structures were built. Despite the continuous developments and modifications introduced in the two thousand years of imperial history, at the close of the nineteenth century there still survived a number of features that had first emerged in the empires of Ch'in (221-210 ac and Han (202 ac - AD 220).

These four centuries saw the formation of a political theory which credited a ruling dynasty with religious and intellectual sanction to exercise authority. This was a considerable advance on immediately preceding assumptions whereby there had been a temptation to regard might as right, despite age-old pretensions that a ruler was a man entrusted with a mission by heaven. The most conspicuous strands of the newly emerging theories, which were a blend of mythology, religion and philosophy, have long been identified and studied, and it is thanks largely to the lead given by Chinese statesmen and philosophers that attention has fastened on the precepts of the Confucian teachers, the syncretist system of Han Confucianism and the disciplines known in general terms as "Legalism".

This emphasis has been responsible for one

of the main sources of bias in China's intellectual history. The Chinese have long portrayed themselves as treading in the footsteps of Confucius and avoiding the excesses and rigours of legalist teaching; full credit has rarely been given to other influences that stand outside the traditional and conventional view. Indeed, in certain cases active steps were taken to prevent recognition of the unpalatable truth, that effective imperial government drew alike on two such sources of inspiration: the institutions of the generally accursed régime of Ch'in; and the generally derided rule of the so-called usurper Wang Mang (AD 9-23) and his appeal to the traditions of the past. Successful empires have been glad to profit from the experience and success of these two régimes but ready to play down the debt that they owed to their examples.

In the same way there has been a tendency to ignore the part played by "Taoist" thought in the formation of China's imperial practices. Taoism has all too often been limited in popular esteem to the origin of Chinese mysticism, and it is one of the merits of *The Art of Rulership* to redress the balance. The book introduces English readers for the first time to a chapter of an important text entitled the *Huai-nan-tzu*, which was completed, as the work of a number of hands, by 139 ac. Much of the purpose of this book lies in seeking an explanation of the natural workings of the universe. As opposed to Confucian thought, which sees man as the centre of all being, and to legalist writings, which subjugate human interests to those of the state, the *Huai-nan-tzu* and other Taoist writings see man as but one of the myriad creatures of nature, and the government of man as a series of measures that should properly conform with that order.

As yet, in the second century ac, there was no rigid distinction between separate schools of philosophy. Key expressions recur in the differing contexts of different writers, with little or no attempt at definition; as a result clear-cut discrimination between "Confucian", "Legalist" and "Taoist" ideas may not always be possible. In introducing Chapter Nine of the *Huai-nan-tzu*, Robert Ames traces the origin and development of five fundamental concepts

of Chinese political philosophy: *wuwei* (non-action); *shih* (strategic advantage); *yi* (natural law); *ying ching* (utilizing the people) and *li* (benefiting the people). He shows the place that these ideas took in earlier writings and their particular application to Chapter Nine of the *Huai-nan-tzu*. There follows a translation of the chapter.

The value of this book is thus twofold. It serves as an introduction to the formation of political thought in the early empires; and it presents an English translation of a Chinese text that has not been available hitherto. Slowly but surely the corpus of Chinese literature is being laid before the Western reader; slowly but surely it is becoming possible to avoid some of the misconceptions regarding China's past that have been due to a lack of access to primary writings. *The Art of Rulership* is to be welcomed as a book that will benefit general readers, students of Chinese history and specialists in political philosophy.

The Romantic inheritance

John Saville

DAVID HOWELL
British Workers and the Independent Labour Party 1888-1906
522pp. Manchester University Press. £35.
0 7190 0920 0

The decline of socialist ideas in Britain - and especially England - during the past two decades (or so) has inevitably prompted renewed analysis of the formative years of the modern Labour movement and of its ideological components. A detailed account of the ILP before 1914 has always been a gap in the literature, and David Howell's book goes a long way to remedy the deficiencies in our understanding.

There are four main parts to his analysis: the ILP and the unions; the history of selected districts where the Party established some degree of influence; the national background to the founding conference of 1893; and finally, an important section on ideas, attitudes, policies, and the significance in general of the ILP in the early socialist movement. What makes this book especially interesting is that Howell is never shy of asking awkward questions of his material, and he is always ready to consider countervailing theories: the possible alternatives to what actually happened.

A good deal of the story is familiar to students of the period, although in somewhat disconnected fashion, but it had never been presented in the detail given here. The crucial historical fact which distinguished Britain from continental Europe was the prior existence for many decades - before the appearance of socialism - of trade unions, friendly societies, a co-operative movement; and by the time a socialist movement came back into British life there had long been established a distinctive working-class culture whose advanced political expression was Labourism, or, as Howell prefers, lib-labism. It was above all the well-grounded unionization that made the impact of socialist ideas in the 1880s so very different from that in those countries of Europe where socialist politics either preceded or went parallel with the economic organization of sections of the working people. What may be summarized as the central theme of this volume is the interaction, at many different levels, of social experiences of the ardent young men and women of the early ILP with those whose Labourist traditions were to prove so tenacious. The differing contexts of British working-class life are finely delineated. Mining, cotton textiles, the railways and the boot and shoe industry - these being the main union sectors considered - had each evolved their own par-

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STEPHEN RODEFER
Four Lectures
74pp. Berkeley: The Figures. \$5.
0935724133

In "The Auroras of Autumn", the poet of our century, if not of our climate, leaves his home to face the intimidating Northern Lights and

opens the door of his house. On flames. The scholar of one candle sees. An Arctic effluence flaring on the frame Of everything he is. And he feels afraid. "Auroras" is probably Stevens' greatest poem; it is certainly his most influential. The scene quoted, for example, reverberates through the early poetry of John Ashbery; in Ashbery's *Rivers and Mountains* (1966), it is rendered as a primal and paternal scene of instruction, as the younger poet notices how "The wreath of the north pole, / Festoons for the late return." The boreal lights, says the ephebe, are "Performing once again, for you and for me"; and "What is agreeable / Is to hold your hand" ("Civilization and its Discontents").

"Auroras" is a difficult poem, but its theme can be stated without mystification: it is about the pain of losing the security of one's first home, and the lifetime work of compensating that loss. The poem is central to the American tradition of neo-Romantic "gorgeous solipsism" that Harold Bloom traces back to Emerson. The poet, says the poem, cannot easily displace filial love on to friends, wives and children: the poet's longest love affair is with himself; his greatest dialogue is an internal one. "It is my own speech and the strength of it, this only," says Stevens in a 1943 essay, "that I hear or ever shall." It is a theme uncannily but precisely anticipated by Pope, in a letter to Bolingbroke:

To write well, lastingly well, immortally well, must not one leave Father and Mother and leave unto Me? Must not one be prepared to endure the reproaches of Me? Must one not, when fasting, say, 'My father, I am the cause?' This such a task as scarce leaves a Man time to be a good Neighbour, an useful friend, nay to plant a Tree, much less to save his Soul.

Stevens is, still, the most potent influence on contemporary American poetry: more than half of the poets discussed here – all of them now in their thirties or forties – quote him directly. And the lesson of "Auroras" remains their central concern. In a poem called "Children," William Logan (one of the youngest) addresses a "wife" who is also, as internal Muse, what constitutes his poet-hood.

You are angered that we have no children. We have An immense white genealogy, each of us a child To the other.

Many of Barry Spacks's poems are examples of "light verse," and to that extent belong more

to a British than to an American tradition. Even here, however, the solipsistic imperative intrudes. In the title poem of *Spacks Street*, the poet anticipates his own fame, but cleverly undercuts this glittering literary future by projecting it even further, into a minor feature of someone else's past:

I wanted a star in my name;
or a state, a river, a unit of measure . . .
a street, at least . . . Spacks Street . . . Spacks
Place . . .

how nice! Imagine the little kids
playing Giant Steps after dinner in summer,
leaping from one of your curbs to the other.
Or someone moves, does well, gains weight
and years and accolades, and says
"God, if they could only see me today,
the old gang
back on Spacks Street!"

Craig Raine has noticed how "Clothes queue up in the wardrobe", and Spacks comes as close as any of these poets to a Martian outlook, as in "Thinking of Peas":

With perfect parents, seemed to fit,
Peas fell. They're schoolmates on a chaise;
They're standers-in-line, waiting patiently
For some wonderful food to open.

Generally, though, to turn from contemporary British poets to their American counterparts is also to turn away from the tyranny of metaphor and physical likeness: Concorde has done nothing to alleviate the synchronic dissociation of sensibilities that has long separated the two traditions. Raine compares dogs to four-leaved clovers, Yale keys and weight-lifters. Robert Farnsworth's canine concern is not with what dogs resemble, but with their meaning in our lives, in "Speech to a Dog":

Don't think I'm out of line
I know my part –
procurer of bones
opener of vile cans

the slow runner panting
exhilarated with chasing you
for the stick
in your grinning jaws

the fall guy for your feints,
and whining in the morning.

"Below the knee", he concludes, "the world / lives another life." In a much more serious poem, we discover Farnsworth in the Stevensian situation: walking alone by the sea. Like Logan, he figures his future poetry as an unborn child:

On the beach tonight years before your birth
I squirt out to the furthest whitecap
gnashing on the bar.
And into the brunt of the wind
I say your name again and again
until it sounds as it will to me.

There is also some apparent Martians in the highly promising work of Anthony Sobin, but in fact he belongs in a tradition of uninhibited intellectual speculation represented most fully in America by the early work of Mark Strand. In "The Calculation", Sobin is sitting (alone again, naturally) in a cheap room in Salt Lake City. He can't recall whether it is Friday or Saturday, and is upset because his television will not in any case pick up a football game in Washington, "but rather lets the signals from the East just zoom by overhead / to disappear forever in space." It follows, sort of, that there must be receivers on distant planets "still pecking up / the Redskins of the fifties and sixties." Like an American Donne, Sobin cannot resist sticking his nose into every potential crevice yielded by the conceit:

At this moment one of the super sensitive antennae
is receiving the Redskins' Brown game of Sunday,
Jan. 15, 1959.

The speed of light being a universal constant, if I
knew just where
that signal was right now, today would be a simple
calculation, but

I don't, and I can't, and we are in the last quarter, and
all lips
Redskin fans are plenty worried and drinking their
kind of beer fast.

At this very second Eddie's arm is cocked same
where about to throw
the game-losing interception, and is frozen in that
pose forever.

hurling past planet, planet and planet, like a
painting, like a painting.

Turning to three women poets, we find them as little affected by neo-Romantic narcissism as they are by Oedipal influence-anxiety. In the

poems of Phyllis Janowitz, Alicia Ostriker and Jane Flanders, there is a strong sense of social

context. Their poems display women working in the world, supporting one another, and coping with family life, as in Flanders's "Make-Up":

In the next room
my daughters are plotting
their escape
under cover of

"Tokyo Rose" and
"Iced Champagne."
Their lips are sticky
as lollipops.

When their new friend,
Maybelline,
waves a tiny wand,
they will be gone.

But I will leave first
by the back door,
wearing "Youth,"
my own disguise.

In "Mendota River Inn", Janowitz writes amusingly of a residential weekend encounter group, without any lurch to romanticize mental trouble:

Irwin Tinowitz holds my shoulders,
looks at my lips and says,
"Alice and I agree
you are most deeply
disturbed of all."

Similarly, Alicia Ostriker avoids romanticizing her fears as she sits in the waiting-room of a breast-cancer clinic. Her emphasis is on the shared experience:

I am wondering what would be a fully human
Way to express our fears, these fears of the be-
rayal

Of our bodies . . . Perhaps we should sit on the floor.
They might have music for us. A woman dancer
Might perform, in the center of the circle. What
would she do?
Would she pretend to rip the breasts from her body?

The self dispersed

D. W. Hartnett

DAVID LEHMAN and CHARLES BERGER
(editors)
James Merrill: Essays in Criticism
329pp. Cornell University Press. £19.
0801414040

This is the first book devoted entirely to the interpretation of James Merrill's poetry. However, as David Lehman, one of the editors, acknowledges in his introduction, the collection concentrates on the trilogy of long poems which has occupied Merrill since the mid-1970s. Indeed, the common assumption informing all these essays is that *The Changing Light at Sandover* is Merrill's major poetic statement.

At times this approach can transform the early poetry into a palimpsest of anticipations. Noting how the trilogy fragments identity, Samuel B. Schulman returns to *The Fire Screen* and *Braving the Elements* to uncover the beginnings of this "dispersal of the self". Consequently he underestimates the stability and resolution of poems such as "After the Fire". J. D. McClatchy's essay on *Water Street* is more attentive to verbal nuance. Even he, though, is inclined to write with one eye on the future. His sensitive treatment of Merrill's use of myth might have benefited from an investigation of its origins in the pre-1960s work.

The two essays on the trilogy's sources and analogues commit more fundamental errors. Both Peter Sacks and Rachel Jacoboff begin with an *a priori* assumption – that Merrill is writing within an elegiac tradition – and that he has produced a modern *Divine Comedy* – and proceed to spiral away from the actual text. Thus Sacks does not seem to realize that the myth of death and resurrection in, say, "Lycidas" has only a tangential relation to Merrill's peculiarly personal vision of reincarnation. Worse still, Jacoboff's claim to find in the trilogy "a Platonic unity behind evident multiplicity" rests on her unsubstantiated assertion that Merrill's prophetic structures have their "source" in some Dantean "unseen authority".

Mention of precursors inevitably summons up the figure of Harold Bloom, and there are two essays here which model their procedures on his. Taking *Kabbalah and Criticism* as his text, Willard Spiegelman applies Bloom's "triple rhythm of contraction, breaking apart,

One way, besides being a woman, to avoid poetic self-absorption is to side-step the romantic tradition. Stephen Rodefer's *Four Lectures*, consisting of nearly one hundred, homogeneous, fifteen-line stanzas, perform this side-step. They place themselves courageously within the increasingly unfashionable tradition of Stevens's great adversary, William Carlos Williams. Buried inside one of these stanzas, among thousands of other unacknowledged quotations, is a phrase from Stevens's famous letter to Williams: "Personally, I have a distaste for miscellany." This is Stevens's comment on Williams's poetry, and Rodefer's stanzas are, precisely, miscellany, crammed full of the inconvenient baggage of everyday life, a future archaeologist's dream.

According to Ice Berg Slim, the ex pimp, no person is good when in bed.

How could such a smart man propose such a dumb idea?
The tokens wore his pockets. Before he left his two month captivity as a hostage, the U.S. Ambassador kissed a tiny female penit who was wearing a blue satin mat. "She's a doctor", he said. One of those embezzlers but not extraordinarily sophisticated sorts that approves too much. So you want to join the bar? that profession prepossessed with ideas of wrong which invents a notice of justice as its ideal? What we are developing here is one take-down.

No job is really interesting that is not trouble from the start.

Rodefer's stanzas are packed with unconnected data ("Carefree is the official transport of the U.S. Olympic team") and random insight ("Jealousy is not the fear of losing, but of dividing. An imperialist passion"). Startling and original, they are the veritable thing.

and mending" to the trilogy and finds it progresses towards revelation through a series of "interruptions". David Lehman is similarly concerned to show how the "breaking of the vessels" metaphor might apply to Merrill's lying more heavily on technical analysis than Spiegelman, he explores how Merrill fragments form and meaning in order to accommodate epiphanic experience.

The three best essays here are less dependent on other people's critical strategies. For David Kalstone the trilogy is the latest in a line of American long poems concerned with the nature of the self. In common with its predecessors it adapts lyric impulse to the demands of epic form. The core of this account compares three early poems with three passages from *Mirabell* to demonstrate how, in the later work, Merrill escapes the constrictions of solipsism. Yet, paradoxically, it is this very willingness to allow other voices into his poetry that enables Merrill to achieve a more convincing vision of selfhood. In another essay limited to just one book of the trilogy Stephen Yeager offers a reading of *Scripts for the Pageant* as an epic of good and evil. Perhaps his most interesting suggestion is that Merrill's polarities ("Yes & No", "God B" and the "Monitor") tend to blur into one another so that the poem avoids "any single belief, or even species of belief".

But it is Richard Saez who, ranging over all three books, provides the most comprehensive interpretation of this complex work. For him the trilogy is grounded in an epic tradition centred on the Judeo-Christian "science of theodicy". However, because Merrill's impulses are secular, relativist and lyrical, the poem's awareness of evil in a good universe resolves into a restless Manichaeanism. It is against this deterministic backdrop that the trilogy's dramas of memory and impermanence take shape. And yet, just as Merrill's lyric imagination yearns for the expansiveness of epic, so his dualities cry out for unity. Saez's examination of such tensions makes his essay the most rewarding essay in the collection.

Finally, two curiosities. In Charles Berger's essay, *Gravity's Rainbow* casts little illumination on Merrill. By contrast, David Jacoboff's postscript gives an account of the public exposure of his taking *Kabbalah and Criticism* as his text. Willard Spiegelman applies Bloom's "triple rhythm of contraction, breaking apart,

Coming out fighting

Jim Crace

NORMAN MAILER
Places and Pontifications
192pp. New English Library. £9.95.
050060306

HILARY MILLS
Mailer: A Biography
477pp. New English Library. £9.95
050060381

During the 1950s and 1960s, an invitation to give a "Writers At Work" interview for the *Paris Review* was the literary equivalent of being a guest on *Desert Island Discs*. The cosy and uncontentious interviews were for established authors, some of them well past their creative peaks. Alimony slave Norman Mailer gave his interview in 1962 (in the same year as Waugh, Perelman and Pound). He was determined to "perform" well. Four years before, Ernest Hemingway, "the champ" in whose image Mailer had cast himself, had occupied the same seat. Mailer had counted that interview to be one of Hemingway's late, great works, an eloquent rebuttal of Gertrude Stein's dictum that "Remarks are not literature". How would Mailer compare?

The answer is partly available in a shortened reprint of the interview in the latest Mailer scrap-book, *Places and Pontifications*. In this – and in the other twenty interviews collected here – Mailer extemporized brilliantly, posturing and embellishing like a jazz soloist. His themes range from self-analysis and self-defence ("Flex the knife and charge the gun") to Charles Manson ("one of the most incandescent sensibilities of our time") and masturbation ("It's bombing oneself . . . its ultimate direction always has to be insanity"). Every facile probe, from "What do you think makes a great sex?" to "How can one be an existentialist in the modern world?", elicits perceptions which are both cogent and elegant. Norman sure can talk. What he cannot do is harness his passions and mind his manners.

Writers, publishers, and interviewers from White House press who had encountered Mailer's ramblers on earlier occasions had found them maddeningly bad. Addicted to Second and "personal violence", Mailer in his delectable (as closely monitored in America as the literary career) sea-sawed alarmingly between "secular prince" and New York cabbie. "I have a changeable personality, a sullen disposition, and a calculating mind", he had written. "I do not care to approach the public as a writer, nor could I succeed for that matter. I am a generous but very spoiled boy, and I seem to have turned into a slightly punch-drunk and ugly club fighter who can fight clean and fight dirty, but likes to fight. I write this not solely out of self-pity (although self-pity is one of my vices) but also to tell the simple truth: I have not gotten nicer as I have grown older." But the frontispiece of the full *Paris Review* interview notes Mailer's "exquisite manner". The role of novelist-being-interviewed suits him very well. Mailer was clearly on his best and soberest behaviour, relishing the ego-endorsement of this interview.

In 1962, Mailer's stock as a novelist was in decline. *The Naked and the Dead*, published to a storm of acclaim in 1948 when the writer was just twenty-six, was a derivative though sharp-minded and ambitious novel. Mailer had done good use of Hemingwayan sensibilities and his own literary strengths. The novels that followed – *The Deer Park* and *Barbary Shore* – were inventive under-achievements, ill-disciplined and indulgent. Mailer also published his first scrap-book, *Advertisements for Myself*, with its distinctive autobiographical *continuo* and the influential centre-piece essay, "The White Negro". It was a bull of a book, intelligent, aggressive and unpredictable. But it was packaged as a last work, clippings from the pages of a spent force. "I would love to be one of the old young men of America," Mailer wrote in the "First Advertisement". The implication was that at thirty-nine, Mailer's fictional imagination had burned out.

It should have been Hilary Mills's major task to investigate these missing early years; to establish the provenance of the over-documented adult Mailer. Her omissions are of promise: "Booze, pot, too much sex, too much failure in one's private life, too much attrition, too much recognition, too little recognition, frustration . . . cowardice . . . apathy." With the exception of "apathy" (yet to come?) here is a virtually chronological inventory of Norman Mailer's progress. It would serve well as a vulgar blurb to Hilary Mills's "life" of the writer, *Mailer: A Biography*. It would serve, too, as a reminder that an author who can so precisely identify his failings and difficulties and broadcast them with such equanimity, is not an artist whose confidence and imagination are in eclipse. The *Paris Review* interview was premature. The best of Mailer was yet to come, even if the "nicest" of Mailer had been jettisoned *en route*.

As a biographer Hilary Mills is stretched to better Mailer's description of himself as "a generous . . . boy". She has nothing to add on the writer's childhood, on the science fiction novel he wrote when he was seven, his obsession with model aeroplanes, his small stature, Brando and Lillian Hellman. Mailer cherished fame; it suited him. In 1956, *The Deer Park* (turned down by at least seven publishers) was finally issued by Putnam to a cruel and damning review. It was, according to the critics, "sordid and crummy", "moronic mindlessness" and "the year's worst snake-pit in fiction". Mailer couldn't take it. First he railed against the "loathsome literary world, neophobic to the core". Then he turned against his Harvard self and declared war on "the totalitarianism of the totally pleasant personality", as if it was his own social quiescence which had invited the critical savaging of his book. "I was finally open to my anger", he wrote. "I felt something shift to murder in me. . . . All I felt then was that I was an outlaw, a psychic outlaw, and I liked it." Mailer's new-found malignancy transformed his work and his personality. His plans for "huge collective novels about American life" were shelved. How could he experience America now? His celebrity made that impossible. "I then began to realize", he says in an interview with Hilary Mills (also reproduced in its entirety in *Places and Pontifications*), "that I was having a form of twentieth century experience which would become more and more prevalent. I was utterly separated from my roots. I was successful and alienated and that was a twentieth century condition." Mailer had discovered "Mailer", the intellectual hipster, "a figure of monumental disproportions" (ie, an invention).

"After *Advertisements for Myself* 'Mailer' became *You* Man in America. By transposing the novelist's imagination and sense of structure to non-fiction and by breaking the press code of objectivity and non-engagement, he made his major contribution to post-war American writing – journalist as protagonist. The soundest examples of Mailer's autojournalism, *Armies of the Night* and *The Executioner's Song*, both won the Pulitzer Prize. He had regained the artistic approbation denied since the early 1950s.

disruptive to what is to become, after some shaky opening chapters marred by repetition and over-writing, a first-rate portrait of the older (one dare not say "mature") writer, his six marriages, his political pretensions, his reckless, uneven talent and his turbulent public career. Yet one is left to make the perilous presumption, based on an absence of evidence, that the Mailer of 1948, at the publication of *The Naked and the Dead*, was a radically more conforming and benign human being than the disruptive literary delinquent, acting the gent for the *Paris Review* in 1962. What was to subvert Mailer's personality?

Beast-Mailer was still captive in the late 1940s when the writer, with his first wife, Bea, flirted with Hollywood (Hemingway had succumbed, after all), parading his incorruptibility from studio to studio. He wouldn't write a film for Bogart. He broke a screen-play contract with Sam Goldwyn (for a happy war picture). He wouldn't guest on chat shows if there were adverts. "His integrity was almost pathological", comments Bea, and Hilary Mills wonders whether he "had gone to Hollywood just to turn down offers". But all who met him there, from Gene Kelly to Montgomery Clift, remember Mailer as a quiet and timid man, supporting his "enormous reputation . . . as the first young writer to have come out of the war" with considerable poise. Mailer was successful, popular and calm.

This calm was virtually intact, too, in the early 1950s when Mailer was living in Greenwich Village. His first marriage had failed; his second book, *Barbary Shore*, had been stiffly received. But the novelist's reputation was relatively unscarred. Anthony West, reviewing *Barbary Shore* for *The New Yorker*, wrote that "a bad press is the price Mr Mailer has had to pay for making the courageous gesture of writing and publishing an overtly socialist book". Second novels are awkward. More and better could be expected.

Mailer built himself establishing credentials as a listed building of American letters. He ran a Sunday afternoon writers' salon at the White Horse Tavern, and made his apartment an open house to contemporaries such as Sontag, Brando and Lillian Hellman. Mailer cherished fame; it suited him.

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Mailer, however, had never relinquished his celebrity. The "psychic outlaw" had become the George Best of literature, more courted

and charted the worse he performed, the more ugly and disruptive his behaviour. Alternately hipper-than-thou and callously violent, he banged about America in a bluster of drink, drugs and bad language, bar-room boxing, thumb-wrestling and horse-play. He had cast himself as a highbrow hoodlum and, though careful to cultivate the politicians and publishers, he turned his anger upon his family and artistic friends. In November 1960, drunk and resentful (why wasn't he respected?), Mailer stabbed his second wife, Adele, in the back and abdomen with a two-inch penknife. Adele was admitted to the casualty ward for emergency surgery; Norman was committed to Bellevue psychiatric hospital for a month by a magistrate who commented drily, "Mr Mailer, your recent history indicates that you cannot distinguish fiction from reality".

Mailer, having established "the knife as an instrument of manhood", next turned to unarmed combat, provoking fights with distinguished Americans from William Styron to Miles Davis. Most innocent and most bullied, both physically and in print, on the Mailer hip-list was fellow war novelist, James Jones. "I love [Norman]" he commented, speaking for America. "But I don't like him." The most public of beast-Mailer's tantrums occurred in 1971, a confrontation with Gore Vidal on the Dick Cavett show. Aggrieved by Vidal's comments that "there has been from Henry Miller to Norman Mailer to Charles Manson a logical progression . . . to think of women as, at best, breeders of sons; at worst, objects to be poked, humiliated, killed", the writer set about "smashing the tea house" of genteel studio conversation. Fortified by drink and the notion that violence is a dignified repartee for a man who is intellectually slighted, Mailer attempted to concuss his critic in the Green Room with one of his now celebrated and crippling head-butts. ("Young Gore", boasted Mailer, had received a blow at "between half and three-quarter throttle".) Vidal, thicker skulled than expected, survived to deliver a scolding on screen: "What I detect in you – and I like many things about you – is a violent man. You are a friend despite this – but your violence, your love of murder, your celebration of rage, of hate . . . This violence, this knocking people down, this carrying on, is a terrible thing. Now it may make you a great artist . . . But Vidal was being kind (or, perhaps, simply prudent). As Hilary Mills's biography makes clear, in its catalogue of Mailer-chauvinism, this "cultural conservative" (Abbie Hoffman), this "prisoner of the virility cult" (Kate Millet), this prophet-cum-profit, has succeeded only in concussing his own talent. He was, during the 1960s perhaps, in Robert Lowell's assessment, "the best journalist in America". But the recognition which he most cherishes, as an imaginative novelist, wasted away after 1948 as his fictions became increasingly bloated. His latest, *American Evening* (soon to be followed by *Tough Guys Don't Dance*) was widely dismissed (pace Richard Poirier in the TLS, June 17, 1983) as tedious and incoherent.

Hilary Mills's biography has, according to a review in the *Washington Post*, "made Norman Mailer almost – if not quite – a sympathetic figure". One can sympathize with the squandered talent, the "generous . . . boy" broken on the wheel of celebrity. But the sixty-year-old Mailer cannot be counted; according to Mills's end-of-term report, as deserving anything but reproach. He merits respect as a determined literary pentathlete – novelist, filmmaker, philosopher, small-time politician and, above all, creative journalist. But it will be the non-literary American public by whom "Norman Mailer" will be most precisely remembered – Mailer the self-publicist, the wife-stabber, the drinker, the brawler, the million-dollar novelist in too much of a hurry to do his work justly, the talent waster who couldn't cope with criticism.

Conrad Aiken: Critical recognition 1914-1981: A bibliographical guide by Catherine Kirk Harris (350pp. Garland Publishing. \$52. 08240 9187 6) is an annotated bibliography which traces the critical reception of Conrad Aiken. Entries are books and sections of books, unpublished commentary and an appendix that cites bibliographical material about Aiken. There are chronologies of Aiken's awards and honours and of his published writings.

Distorting mirrors

David Gascoyne

VIVIANE FORRESTER

Van Gogh ou l'enterrément dans les blés
347pp. Paris: Seuil. 79fr.
202006448

The salient feat achieved by Viviane Forrester in her new study of Van Gogh is that of bringing out anew, and revealing in all its intricacy, the psychodrama hidden by the now commonly accepted stereotype of the artist. Half-way through her book she clearly indicates the degree of confusion confronting anyone attempting to elucidate her chosen subject:

Personne, dans cette histoire, n'est simple. A travers les lettres, les témoignages si crus, si spontanés, apparaissent innombrables, des fluctuations au gré des émotions, des circonstances: chacun est aux prises avec ses fantasmes, ses désirs, ses haines refoulées. Tous sont contradictoires. Vivants. Et tous sont perçus par Vincent, lequel est perçu par eux, à travers les miroirs déformants des subjectivités troublées par l'inconscient, et compliquées du reflet, des interférences d'autres subjectivités.

The *dramatis personae* of the Van Gogh saga can be reduced to a relatively small cast of essential characters: but a more than superficial understanding of it requires consideration of a number of relatives, friends and acquaintances to whom proper attention has seldom been paid by any one biographer or critic. Viviane Forrester may to some extent have been selective in appraising the relative importance of these more marginal roles, but she cannot be said to have neglected to name any individual who had the least significance in the story. It would seem that almost everyone he ever knew or met had some sort of significance for Vincent, on account of his inherent capacity for emotional involvement with those about him, and the respect accorded by him to everyone, perhaps in particular to the humblest. This unflinching generosity was accompanied by the shrewd perceptiveness peculiar to innocence, rarely deceived by deficient integrity and never impressed by the self-importance of anyone, however brilliant. Viviane Forrester frequently draws attention to the astonishingly lucid self-awareness that accompanied the savage, intermittent inner disturbances by which Van Gogh was afflicted during the concluding phase of his existence, an awareness no doubt correlative with that characteristic self-detachment which became increasingly indistinguishable from what is commonly diagnosed as dissociation of the personality.

Viviane Forrester's attitude to the question of what is still generally regarded as Van Gogh's madness is unequivocal:

A quel bon faire état des innombrables diagnostics, un véritable catalogue de tous les effets "folle" dans un affable Van Gogh?

La "maladie"? Il y avait Vincent, non dissocié. Il y eut la pensée de Vincent, aux limites, son désir français, son désir projeté. La maladie? Ce fut surtout la "santé" des autres, leur prétendue santé: ce fut l'absence organisée d'identité des autres...

And she goes on to quote, not surprisingly, from Artaud's commentary on Van Gogh, "le Suicidé de la Société". This might suggest that her point of view has some affinity with the theories elaborated during recent decades by Foucault, Laing or Thomas Szasz; but having ostensibly little faith in any ideological system, she refers once, in passing, only to Freud.

What emerges as the *clou* of her analysis of Van Gogh's psychological dilemma is the paramount importance she attaches to the fact that exactly a year to the day before his own birth his mother was delivered of a still-born first child, later interred outside his father's parish church at Zundert under a stone inscribed with the name Vincent Wilhelm van Gogh. To argue, as this book does from the start, that Vincent I, as its author calls this amorphous being, haunted the conscience and the unconscious mind of his namesake and successor throughout his apparently disastrous career, may strike one at first as a hazardous undertaking; but the case is made so cogently that I, for one, have been persuaded that it does, in fact, end by shedding valuable new light on a destiny that can now be seen to have been, despite all odds, triumphantly creative.

Another innovative feature of Viviane Forrester's treatment of her subject is the thorough-going exegesis it contains of a work by Dickens that attracted Van Gogh so much that he read it repeatedly. This was the last and perhaps least well-known of the *Christmas*



Tom Keating's "Vincent Van Gogh with Sunflowers", included in the sale of Keating's paintings, watercolours and drawings which will take place at Christie's on December 12.

Books series, a story some 100 pages long, first published in 1853 under the title "The Haunted Man". It does indeed contain many remarkable symbolic analogies and parallels with some of the painter's most constant preoccupations, as well as evidence contributing support to the conjecture that he never succeeded in repressing all recollection of the Vincent who had preceded him and whose life he had usurped. Dickens's story begins and ends by quoting the words of an inscription engraved on a panel of the chamber that provides the tale's principal setting: "Lord, keep my memory green!"

Viviane Forrester's comment on the end of Van Gogh's life-cycle is as caustic as it is laconic:

"Artes? Vincent a trente-cinq ans. Saint-Rémy? Trente-six ans. Auvers? Il y meurt à trente-sept ans et quatre mois. Théo mourra à trente-quatre ans. C'est vite fait d'assassiner les génères. Et de capter les biens qu'on leur a estorqué sous la torture. Et de nommer ces biens un héritage."

Purists may find her style somewhat *général*, insofar as it confronts them with an unusual profusion of italics and exclamation-marks; others may take exception to her exceedingly personal approach. But that her book is packed with question-marks seems to me an indication that can now be seen to have been, despite all odds, triumphantly creative.

Another innovative feature of Viviane Forrester's treatment of her subject is the thorough-going exegesis it contains of a work by Dickens that attracted Van Gogh so much that he read it repeatedly. This was the last and perhaps least well-known of the *Christmas*

Pots pourris

Peter Fuller

TONY BIRKS

Hans Coper
208pp, with black-and-white and colour illustrations. Collins. £25.
010-4117743

Tony Birks believes Hans Coper was "the most original ceramic artist of the 20th century". His book is sensitively written and beautifully illustrated with black-and-white photographs by Coper's widow, Jane Gate: it is an act of homage by an admirer who is himself an experienced potter.

Those who knew Coper only through his work will undoubtedly be surprised by his biography. He endured suffering, even tragedy, with a resigned, self-effacing stoicism. He was born of a Jewish father in Germany in 1920; the family was persecuted under the Nazis, and when Coper was sixteen, his father committed suicide. Three years later, he fled to England, where he was promptly interned as an enemy alien. After the war his life was dogged by poverty, lack of success in personal relationships and ill health.

His principle consolation came from his work. He found his vocation in 1946, when he met Lucie Rie, and began to work at her Albion Mews Pottery. Rie had come to London from Vienna in 1939. Her delicate pots were influenced by the styles and values of the European modernist movements. Unlike Bernard Leach and his followers, she had little sympathy with English artisanal or oriental pottery, rejected pattern and ornamentation, and experimented with unusual shapes and forms. Coper was never a pupil of Rie's, but he learned an enormous amount from her and worked in her studio until 1958. He then went to live and work in Henry Morris's artists' community in Digsway, and in the 1960s began to teach at Camberwell and the Royal College of Art. In 1967 he moved to a farmhouse in Ffones with Jane Gate, whom he married in 1978. Sadly, however, he fell seriously ill: the following year and was compelled to spend his last six years as a virtual recluse. Although he developed a sympathy for the anonymous pottery of the past, his interest in it was largely formal: his aesthetic affiliations were with the modern movement. He made no use of the attractive coloured glazes that characterized Rie's work, and he was less interested than she was in pottery's domestic functions, going in for increasingly exotic shapes. Some of his pots were thrown; others were constructed as a collage of sections from previously thrown pieces.

Birks evidently responds strongly to Coper's idiosyncratic achievement, but his otherwise temperate and informative text is marred by those ritual denunciations of Bernard Leach and his tradition which now seem almost obligatory. For example, when Coper died, Lord Queensberry declared he had "a talent far greater than Leach, Stalton-Murray or Cardew", and that his work could "be placed beside the great sculptors of the twentieth century such as Moore, Brancusi, and Hepworth and hold its own".

I do not believe that such judgments will be sustained for very long. The more one knows of Coper's work, the more one realizes that his positive qualities (his skills as a thrower and his sensitivity to the pottery of the past) were of that traditional kind which Leach could, and sometimes did, admire. But his much acclaimed innovations are of more doubtful value.

I share the scepticism once voiced by the fine potter Michael Cardew about the achievement of both Rie and Coper. Cardew always emphasized that good pottery, as distinct from sculpture, is rooted in what he called "the proper work" of the potter, the making of "pots for everyday use, for food and drink, and many of them as a man can make well by hand-processes". Leach and Cardew were right to see pottery, in the twentieth century, as a recuperative, conservative and traditional practice, and they set about reviving the tradition in order that they could be original in it. Rie and Coper sought easier answers in life: modern movement, with its emphasis on the novel, modernity and change. But it is doubtful whether they found them. I do not believe there is a single pot by Coper which rivals the best that Leach or Cardew produced.

Affairs of status

Douglas Mills

ANDREW PEKARIK (Editor)

Ukifune: Love in "The Tale of Genji"
283pp. Guildford: Columbia University Press.
£13.55.

0231 045980

RICHARD BOWRING (Translator)
Murasaki Shikibu: Her Diary and Poetic Memoirs

280pp. Guildford: Princeton University Press.
£18.50.
0891 065071

The Tale of Genji by Murasaki Shikibu is widely known through the translations of Arthur Waley and, more recently, Edward Seidensticker. Until now, however, the only book on the author or on her work has been a frustrating volume published by the Japanese Unesco National Committee - frustrating because the English, translated from Japanese, is often bafflingly opaque. *Ukifune: Love in "The Tale of Genji"* and *Murasaki Shikibu: Her Diary and Poetic Memoirs* are both products of careful scholarship though with ample appeal for the general reader. The first is a collection of discerning essays on several aspects of the *Tale* and the second a very readable translation and study of virtually the only contemporary source of information about Murasaki, her *Diary*, and a collection of poems bearing her name.

The volume of essays has been assembled by Andrew Pekarik as a memorial to his teacher, Ian Morris, who died in 1976. Though Morris's *World of the Shining Prince* touched on some aspects of *Genji* he was, just before his death, planning a book of essays by specialists focusing on the Ukifune chapter, whose enigmatic heroine Morris considered "the most interesting, original and convincing" woman character in the *Tale*. In the event *Ukifune: Love in "The Tale of Genji"* has turned out to have a rather wider scope, since some contributors treat characters or situations in the *Genji* as a whole.

Brooks essays which deal with "technique of matters are in no sense dry academic, but approach their subject from the viewpoint of the general critical assessment of the novel. The Earl Miner, having analysed the "chapter units" of the Yûgao, Maboroshi and Ukifune chapters, notes inter alia that in those in Maboroshi "time" beginnings (as distinct from name or place beginnings) are twice as frequent as in the other two chapters; and what we are led to presume on the basis of thematic criticism, Alleen Gatten, after briefly surveying the textual history of *Genji*, assesses the validity and provenance of a particular textual variant passage, an apparent chronological contradiction and the faulty introduction of a character.

The role of poetry is considered in two essays. Any Vladeck Heinrich examines it to some extent in isolation from the text, while Emory Ramirez-Christensen analyses in three earlier chapters (they relate the story of Kaoru's love for Oigimi from its inception to its tragic conclusion in Oigimi's death) "the way the narrative is at once diffused and sustained by linguistic moments which transcend their particular contexts to echo and foreshadow other moments in the narrative the way a lyric poem 'deploys' word-images in patterned arrangement".

Kaoru's later affair with Ukifune is an example of recurrence, as he tries to relive his love for Oigimi. In another essay, "The Heroine", Professor Miner shows how characters and incidents in Ukifune are amplified by parallel scenes and incidents earlier in *Genji*. Haruo Shirane compares Kaoru's need for surrogates with a pattern found earlier in the novel. But perhaps there *Genji* finds fulfilment in surrogate. Kaoru is repeatedly rejected by Oigimi's surrogate and becomes a failed lover and anti-hero. Shirane also stresses the antithesis between the two worlds created in the Uji chapter, one of the mountain villages and of the capital and court, a contrast between secular and the religious character of the mountain world, and between the romantic ideal of the *Genji* and the reality in Murasaki's time.

An illuminating analysis of that reality, of what was "promiscuous" and what was acceptable, is provided by Pekarik's chapter "Rivals in Love". As he wrote, "Status was almost everything at the Heian court and Ukifune's uncertain position makes her particularly vulnerable." But not only social status complicated love affairs. One of the best essays in the book, regrettably short because based on Morris's own notes, discusses how much the suffering undergone by the characters in *Genji* results from "Deception and Self-deception". Seidensticker is at pains to pick out small indications in Ukifune of another aspect of reality, the realities of power and influence in the countryside which could lead to "Rough Business". The longest essay treats a subject peripheral to literature but still of great interest, "The Artist's View of Ukifune". Julia Meech-Pekarik surveys with numerous illustrations the treatment of the *Tale* in general and Ukifune in particular down to the late Tokugawa period.

These essays demonstrate admirably the complexity and consummate artistry of the *Tale*. As Richard Bowring in his introduction to *Murasaki Shikibu: Her Diary and Poetic Memoirs* shows, the known facts of Murasaki's life are scanty indeed; we do not even know with certainty the year of her birth, and though she may have died just after 1014 in her early forties, she may also have lived for ten more years. We do know that romantic ideas about love inspired by the *Tale* filled the head of the young Lady Sarashina about 1020. We also know, however, from Murasaki's *Diary*, which deals with events of 1008-09, that by that time she already had a reputation for learning and was known as the creator of Prince Genji. Though not of high rank, being only the daughter of a provincial governor and having in 998 married another provincial governor, she was summoned to join the entourage of the Empress Shôshi, daughter of Michinaga, the Civil Dictator. According to tradition, Murasaki's life with her husband was happy, but such happiness as she experienced (he had three other wives, as well as being heavily involved as her father) did not last long, for he died in 1001, leaving her with a daughter. Murasaki entered Shôshi's court in 1005 or 1006. As well as her *Diary* there exists a collection of *waka* poems entitled *Murasaki Shikibu shû*, which Bowring calls her "Poetic Memoirs".

Although the first half follows a chronological sequence, the *Diary* consists of mostly objective descriptions of the activities and ceremonies associated with the birth of Shôshi's son Aisuhira, an event which set the seal on his grandfather's power as the real ruler of Japan; it ends with a short section of passages of the same general kind. The bulk of the rest of the work in some sense resembles Sei Shônagon's *Pillow Book*; it contains many expressions of Murasaki's feelings about life at court and life in general, together with often censorious comments about other court ladies. Bowring comments that the *Diary* "represents a unique combination of those two elements which give the best of Heian prose its 'modern feel': 'realism' and 'confessionalism'".

Curiously, the long "confessional" section contains certain very suffices which suggest that the writer had an addressee in mind; and it ends with the statement "Please return this as soon as you have read it...". To whom this "letter" might have been addressed is unknown. Inevitably, there has long been discussion of the heterogeneous nature of the *Diary*, whether we have it in its original form, or whether some opening section has been lost; but we can be grateful for the self-revelations in the "letter" section. Murasaki not only found Shôshi's court dull, she was alienated by the artificiality of court life (as well as by the not infrequent vulgarity of drunken male courtiers). "The enforced isolation", writes Bowring,

and the overwhelming artificiality bred an introverted and overwrought character... It was a special kind of hot-house, whose conditions were never really to occur again, and it played a decisive role in the genesis of the *Genji*.... The impulse of the *Genji* was to create a world of the imagination, a world of the mind, which was the appetite for the explanation of motives, which in turn the prime element in successful characterization; and it is in characterization that we see the greatest difference between the *Genji* and the preceding, and indeed its successors.

Murasaki's poems and poetic exchanges with others appear to follow a pattern corresponding to her life. Bowring stresses that it is essentially a fictional construct. But we do not know whether Murasaki herself or some other person assembled the poems and wrote the introductions. The latter are not only brief and laconic, they identify almost none of the characters whose poems they precede. Given the nature of the Japanese language, it cannot always be said even whether a poem is by a man or by a woman.

In its first part, the collection gives an impression of Murasaki that is lively, positive and free from self-doubt, but later "the world turns to sadness and grief", and the picture given by the *Diary* is reinforced. Yet Bowring maintains that a strikingly strong sense of individuality emerges. The lady has "a coolness and objectivity that borders on insensitivity and hardness", an "inner steel which takes [her] through the bitterness of bereavement into maturity". She emerges as a person "who had simply lived a life that she believed had validity and that was worth recording for posterity". One is reminded of the famous passage in the "Fireflies" chapter of *Genji* where Murasaki puts into Genji's mouth an explanation of the story-teller's art as an urge to transmit deeply felt experiences to posterity.

Bowring's translation of Murasaki's *Diary* is a fine achievement, and should finally consign to oblivion the quaint and hopelessly unreliable version found in the sixty-year-old *Diaries of Court Ladies of Old Japan*. As one would expect, it is a model of faithfulness compared with the extracts from the *Diary* given in the introduction to Waley's version of the *Tale*. Diligent comparison of the Bowring translation with the original has yielded only a couple of instances where one would disagree with him. Above all, it reads well, except perhaps for an occasional over-colloquial note. I certainly cannot agree, however, with Bowring's solution to the problem of reference in the introductions to some of the poems which are unspecific even as to sex: "met someone I had known long ago as a child, but the moment was brief and I hardly recognized them... They left hurriedly...". It is simply not acceptable English. However, these are minor blemishes on a book which is a most welcome contribution to Western knowledge of Japanese literature, not least because it can satisfy both general and specialist readers alike. It provides very full (and fully technical) discussions of the problems of the structure of the *Diary* and the *Poetic Memoirs*, and even includes translations from male diaries of the time which recount (in pseudo-Chinese, of course) the events described in the first part of Murasaki's diary. Moreover, the translation of the *Diary*, though not that of the *Memoirs*, is accompanied on the opposite pages by copious and detailed notes which do not shrink discussion of the sometimes widely divergent interpretations of Japanese commentators. No one reading these notes can remain under illusion as to the difficulty of the task which Bowring has undertaken, or the extent of his labour. That a young scholar who made his debut with a study of the Meiji-period interpreter to Japan of Western literary culture, Mori Ôgai, has been able to go back nearly nine centuries and show himself thoroughly at home with the language and culture of the Heian period is remarkable.

INFORMATION, PLEASE

Anecdotes about writers and artists: anecdotal material about twentieth-century writers and artists, including performing artists, together with sources where available; for a collection now in preparation.

Second World War poetry: poems written by members of the services during the Second World War, whether unpublished or printed in contemporary magazines; for a new anthology to be published in May 1985 by Dent; submissions should be sent to the address below.

CARVER FM,
J. W. HACKETT,
Book Trade, 84, St. Andrew's Place, 84, Temple Chambers, London EC4A 3DF.

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Egisto Tango, conductor (1927-51) of the Royal Danish Opera House: personal recollections, photographs, letters or other relevant material; for a biography.
GERARD J. TANGCO,
1783 Coliseum Street, Apt 28, New Orleans, Louisiana 70130.

High MacDiarmid: photographs sought to illustrate a forthcoming edition of MacDiarmid's letters.
ALAN BOLD,
Baltham Burn, East Cottages, nr Markinch, Glenrothes, Fife KY7 6NE.

Intuitively German

Iain Boyd Whyte

STEPHEN ERIC BONNER and DOUGLAS KELLNER (Editors)

Passion and Rebellion:
The Expressionist Heritage
468pp. Croom Helm. £22.50.
07099 06307

German Expressionism drew on a wide and disparate range of sources, evolved through various phases in the course of its comparative long life, and never focused on one central authority or on one formal technique. At different points in its history it was able to embrace, for example, Stramm's clipped neologisms and the rhapodic rhetoric of Werfel, the abstraction of Kandinsky and the brutal realism of Beckmann, Hasenclever's periphrastic play *Der Sohn*, and the chthonic yearnings for universal peace and harmony that characterized the movement after 1918. As a result of this diversity, Expressionism is virtually meaningless as a descriptive term and presents the critic with almost insurmountable problems.

In the attempt to explain the movement and to give it contours, American scholars have played a prominent role. During the 1930s and 40s America offered an exile for many of the former Expressionists and a home for their

works, and many of the early accounts of the movement were published in America. Although studies on Expressionism appeared in Germany in the 1960s and 70s, concern for the topic, at least in West Germany, appears to have waned again, leaving the Americans to champion the cause today; confirmation of this is provided by the success of the exhibition "Expressionism, a German Intuition", recently held at the Guggenheim. This interest, however, is not only historical, but also historical; for the current generation of artists and intellectuals are looking to the German Expressionists as models for the present day. *Passion and Rebellion*, which contains twenty-two essays on Expressionist politics, painting, film and the performing arts, is an example of this tendency.

The editors, Stephen Eric Bonner and Douglas Kellner, set out to "re-interpret" German Expressionism with the specific intention of drawing conclusions on which a "viable Marxist aesthetic" might be based. Sadly, the means that they employ are inadequate. In the introductory essay, earlier accounts of the movement are condemned and a fresh reading is proposed, in the light of "the peculiar development of German industrial capitalism". In fact we are offered the standard account in which the "younger generation" rejected the materialism of Wilhelmian Germany and launched itself on subjective search for spiritual

human essence, which would banish the evils of capitalism and reunite the warring factions in society. Accordingly, the social, political and economic institutions of the Wilhelmian period are summarily dismissed in these essays as "empty, and destructive", as paradigms of "positivism", "rotten materialism", and "the blatant self-interest of capitalism". Although appealing, particularly if one wishes to draw parallels with contemporary capitalist society, this interpretation is grossly uninformative. Recent German research, for example into the AEG, suggests that the reality was not so simple. This Expressionism-as-reaction thesis also leaves unexplained the collapse of the Expressionist impulse around 1922 in favour of the new, capitalist gods of functionalism, Taylorism and "Saehlichkeit".

Although little fresh source material is produced, the book includes good expositions of Expressionist films, particularly of *Der Golem*, thoughtful pieces on Otto Gross, Kafka, Döblin's *Alexanderplatz*, and Ernst Bloch, and a welcome account of the 1937 Expressionist *Verstärkter* debate, which involved such luminaries as Lukács, Bloch, Vogeler, and Brecht's further highlight is Henry Pachter's vigorous account of the pre-war café culture (previously published in his *Weimar Studies*). Too often, though, the interesting material under discussion is obscured by vacuous pronouncements and the rhetoric of the New Left.